DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 406 079 RC 020 963

TITLE	Pathways from Poverty Educational Network.
INSTITUTION	Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development, University Park, PA.
SPONS AGENCY	Kellogg Foundation, Battle Creek, Mich.
PUB DATE	Dec 96
NOTE	140p.; For selected individual papers, see RC 020 964-965.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Conference Proceedings (021) -- Reference Materials - Directories/Catalogs (132) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Community Development; *Community Education; Community Services; Educational Opportunities; Employment Opportunities; Family Programs; *Housing; Human Capital; *Poverty; *Poverty Programs; Profiles; *Rural Areas; Rural Development; Workshops
IDENTIFIERS	*United States (Northeast)

ABSTRACT

Pathways from Poverty is a public policy education and research initiative organized by the Rural Sociological Society's Task Force on Persistent Rural Poverty and the four regional rural development centers. This publication focuses on project efforts in the Northeast and includes three sections. The first section describes the Pathways from Poverty Workshop for the Northeast Region (Boston, Massachusetts, September, 1995); reviews the history of the project, which aims to create innovative pathways from poverty for rural people and places through collaborative state teams; and profiles four researchers and visionaries. These profiles describe the life and work of Gene Summers ("Up from 'the Bottoms,'" by Eileen Zuber); Virginia Schein ("Dancing with Words: An Afternoon with Virginia Schein," by Eileen Zuber); John Gaventa ("Searching from Within," by Pete Saba); and Leif Jensen ("Bridging the Gap," by Steve Nelson). The second section includes seven presentations from the 1995 workshop: "Working from the Margins: Voices of Mothers in Poverty" (Virginia E. Schein); "Working Together for a Change: Social Capital As a Pathway from Poverty" (John Gaventa); "Demographics of Rural Poverty" (Leif Jensen); "Work and Income Overview" (Ann Tickamyer); "Poor Kids in a Rich Nation: Eating the Seed Corn" (Patricia Garrett); "Human Capital and Poverty in Rural America" (Daniel Lichter); and "Where Do We Go from Here?" (Kenneth E. Martin). The final section describes the state Pathways from Poverty teams and 64 poverty programs in Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and West Virginia. These programs provide leadership training, summer educational opportunities for youth and children, support for community development, support for small business development and entrepreneurship, adult literacy and computer literacy, community supported agriculture, community health services, parenting education for youth and high-risk families, services for migrant families and children, job skills training, family services, rural housing development, nutrition education, support for postsecondary attendance, opportunities for community service learning, and temporary shelter. Includes a program index. (SV)

ED 406 079

Pathways from Poverty

"In a land as rich as America, poverty is simply not acceptable. No child should have to go to bed hungry. No elderly person should suffer ill health when treatment is available. No family should have to live in a shelter for the homeless when there are houses standing empty."

"In a land of plenty, poverty is an unnecessary source of agony in the lives of too many people. Poverty produces needless suffering. It results in a loss of human dignity. It is a drain on the economies of communities, of states, of the regions, and the nation. We must find ways to reduce this loss of human and economic resources."

"How do we make such a dream come true? First, we must have a vision of what could be. Then, we must have the commitment to make it so."

Gene Summers

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Acknowledgments:

We wish to thank the following people for their generous support of the
Pathways from Poverty effort and the Pathways from Poverty Educational Network publication:

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation

The USDA-CSREES

The Farm Foundation

Presentors and Participants in the
Pathways from Poverty Workshop for the Northeast Region

The Rural Sociological Society's Task Force on Persistent Poverty

Writers-Editors: Eileen Zuber and Steve Nelson
Cover Designer: Mark Preston. Publication Designer: Steve Nelson
Writers-Editorial Assistants: Dana Whelchel and Andy McIlvaine
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Student Interns: Pete Saba and Tammy Hudson
Photographs Compliments of: Agricultural Information Services, Penn State;
Mark Preston; Catherine Healy, art student, University of Maine;
Debbie Geraci, New York Rural Housing Coalition, Inc.; the late Judy Schwartz;
Steve Nelson; and Jane Mecum, SuperCupboards
Maps: Mark Nord, Economic Research Service

A Publication of the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development

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This material is based upon work supported by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. The W. K. Kellogg Foundation was established in 1930 to "help people to help themselves." As a private grantmaking organization, it provides seed money to organizations and institutions that have identified problems and designed constructive action programs aimed at solutions.

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Penn State Printing Services
(sample count and date) 8 M12/96

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FOREWORD

Welcome to the Pathways from Poverty Educational Network. The fact that you are reading this foreword is encouraging; it means that you are one of a growing number of individuals who are interested in helping impoverished rural people find 'pathways from poverty.' We hope that this publication will serve not only as an introduction to the current state of rural poverty issues, but also as a resource for those seeking assistance and/or partners in the battle against rural poverty.

This publication is not meant to be read from cover-to-cover. The first section contains interesting profiles of both the plenary session speakers from the September 1995, Pathways from Poverty Workshop for the Northeast Region, and Pathways visionary, Gene Summers. The rest of the publication is meant to be used as a resource guide -- providing background information on the current state of rural poverty in the second section, and a state by state listing of resources in the third section.

The presentations from the Pathways from Poverty Workshop for the Northeast Region held on September 25-27, 1995 in Boston, Massachusetts, have been reprinted here to provide background information and perspectives on the current state of rural poverty. The workshop addressed ways to rebuild communities and to prevent poverty. The disscussions led to the emergence of two main themes: coalition building (the combined involvement of grass roots organizations and community institutions) and building community capacity (strengthening community leadership and social infrastructure).

The state by state resource guide highlights organizations that are helping communities to build coalitions and community capacity. Although it is not a comprehensive list of every existing program, the list includes the state Pathways from Poverty teams and their contacts, along with sixty-four firms, foundations, companies and community-based organizations that are working cooperatively on a wide variety of poverty issues. Both the teams and programs are organized alphabetically by state. The programs also are indexed by category, according to the three pathways from poverty defined by The Rural Sociological Society's Task Force on Persistent Poverty: Education and Human Capital; Family, Health, and Housing; and Work and Income.

We thank you for your interest. With your help, we can form a stronger support network for the ever increasing population of poor, rural people. We especially wish to thank The W.K. Kellogg Foundation and The USDA-CSREES for making this publication possible and for their continuing support of projects such as Pathways from Poverty.

-- Daryl Heasley
NERCRD Director

Workshop Overview

Introduction:

September 25-27, 1995, the Pathways from Poverty workshop for the Northeast Region was held at the Sheraton Towers in Boston, Massachusetts. Pathways from Poverty teams from every state in the region attended. One hundred and twenty one participants included representatives of colleges and universities (cooperative extension), government agencies, non-profit grassroots organizations, state offices of rural health, and state rural development councils.

Day I of Workshop:

Gene Summers, professor of rural sociology, University of Wisconsin, and a prominant figure in the initiation and continuation of the Rural Sociological Society's Task Force on Persistent Poverty effort, provided the workshop overview. Other Plenary Session presenters included Virginia Schein, John Gaventa and Leif Jensen.

Based on the research in her book of the same title, **Virginia Schein**, professor and chair of the management department, Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, PA, presented *Working From The Margins: Voices of Mothers in Poverty*. Schein provided information on the complexity of poverty related to single-parent female headed households and proposed a three-pronged framework to help women lift themselves from poverty. This framework focuses on Income Opportunities, Social Support and Linking Systems, and Health and Healing.

John Gaventa, professor of sociology, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN, presented *Working Together for a Change: Social Capital as a Pathway from Poverty*. Gaventa emphasized that whether we begin with building human capital, social capital, or economic captial, all approaches must be intertwined. He applauded the "Pathways" workshop for bringing together people from different sectors and pathways to develop and initiate plans to alleviate poverty.

Leif Jensen, associate professor of rural sociology, Penn State, University Park, PA, presented *Demographics of Rural Poverty*. Jensen's presentation focused on definitions of poverty, levels and trends in poverty, the geographic distribution of poverty in the Northeast and a profile of the nonmetro poor in the Northeast.

The remaining first day of the workshop was devoted to team and functional group meetings.

Day II of the Workshop:

The second day of the workshop, state team members attended presentations based on programs that help people to become self-sufficient. The programs were categorized by the three issue groups identified by the Rural Sociological Society's Task Force on Persistent Poverty: (1) Work and Income; (2) Family, Health, and Housing; and (3) Education and Human Capital.

Gene Summers shared selected outcomes from the completed Pathways from Poverty workshop in the Southern Region. State teams met with their facilitators, followed by a meeting of facilitators. Action plans and progress were discussed during these meetings.

Day III of the Workshop:

State team members devoted the morning to developing action plans, follow-up, and preparing posters to share this information with other state teams. After poster sharing, **Ken Martin**, associate director of the Northeast Center and director of the Pennsylvania Office of Rural Health, discussed resources available to help teams realize their plans.

PATHWAYS FROM POVERTY HISTORY

- by Gene Summers

● National Rural Studies Committee

In 1988, when Emery Castle, graduate faculty member of Economics at Oregon State University and former director of Resources For the Future, was assembling the National Rural Studies Committee, he approached me to serve on it, and, of course, I was delighted to do that. The purpose of the Committee was to bring rural issues to the attention of the public. Once a year, the Committee met in a different part of the country and took field trips into rural areas to learn more about the nature of rural problems in that region.

● Mississippi Delta Visit: Spring 1989.

The Pathways from Poverty Project began in the spring of 1989 when I spent three days in the Mississippi Delta as a member of the National Rural Studies Committee. The days we spent there reminded me very vividly of my own roots in rural poverty and why I had decided to become a sociologist: to help wipe out the inequality that exists between regions, races, and genders. One of the most vivid memories of those three days was a breakfast I shared with Henry, a black man who had *"come up"* on a plantation in the Mississippi Delta.

As we ate our food, Henry said to me, "Gene, the wealth of these Mississippi planters was made by the sweat and toil and blood of my Grandma and Grandpa, my Dad and Mamma. I just want my children to have a piece of their estate. But that's my problem."

I said to him then, and I say to you now, "Henry, this is not your problem. This is not a problem of the Delta. This is not a problem of Mississippi or the South. This is our problem. This is America's problem."

I returned from that Mississippi meeting determined to use my year as president of the Rural Sociological Society to put the issues of rural minorities and poverty back on the agenda for rural sociologists and social scientists. I also hoped to position the Rural Sociological Society in a leadership role for research, teaching, and action programs that are creating pathways from poverty for rural people and places.

● Creation of Task Force on Persistent Rural Poverty.

In August 1990, the Council authorized the creation of a task force on persistent rural poverty. The Task Force's mission was to provide a conceptual clarification regarding the factors and dynamics of society that precipitate and perpetuate rural poverty. Over the next two years, with support from the **W. K. Kellogg Foundation** and the four **Regional Centers for Rural Development**, participants from many social science disciplines carried out their mission. In January 1993, the Task Force report, Persistent Poverty in Rural America, was published by Westview Press. In addition to their final report, the Task Force members produced one book, over 60 professional articles, several special issues of professional journals, and a teaching guide and resource book for college and university courses on rural poverty. They also organized numerous sessions at professional association meetings.

● Three New Programs Launched.

At the end of two years, some Task Force members were so excited about what they had learned that they wanted to continue their work in a public policy educational mode. With continued funding from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and additional support from The Ford Foundation and The Farm Foundation, we launched three new programs: (1) The Congressional Colloquium Series, (2) the Regional Pathways from Poverty Workshops, and (3) the Pathways from Poverty State Teams.

● The Congressional Colloquium Series.

The Congressional Colloquium Series is designed to facilitate communication between members of Congress, their aides, and social scientists knowledgeable of rural poverty issues. That effort continues, and we are now planning the 12th session.

● The Regional Pathways from Poverty Workshops.

Regional- and state-level activities began with the first regional workshop on Pathways from Poverty, which was held in Memphis, Tennessee, September 1993. Working together, the **Rural Sociological Task Force** and the **Southern Rural Development Center** organized Pathways from Poverty state teams in each of the states served by the Southern Center. The workshop provided state team members from across the region the chance to learn more about rural poverty and current efforts to create pathways from poverty in some communities of the region. Each state team was challenged to create a vision of what they might do in their own state to create and sustain pathways from poverty. This organizing effort was viewed by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation as an experiment and agreed that if it proved to be successful, they would fund additional workshops in collaboration with the remaining three Regional Rural Development Centers.

The workshop was successful, and funding was made available by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation to the other three Regional Rural Development Centers to hold similar workshops and organize state teams within each region. In May of 1995, the Western Rural Development Center held the workshop for the western states and the Pacific Island Territories. The Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development held the workshop for the Northeast region in Boston, Massachusetts, September 1995, and the final workshop was organized by the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development and held for the North Central region in Collinsville, Illinois, March 1996.

● The Pathways from Poverty State Teams.

The W. K. Kellogg Foundation also invited state action teams to submit proposals to them if funding was needed to turn state plans into reality. In the Southern region, they funded the work of the South Carolina state team. Other state teams have moved forward without Kellogg support, but our colleagues at the Foundation remain vitally interested in the work of the teams throughout the nation and are receptive to additional proposals from other state teams.

● Pathways from Poverty Newsletter.

In order to facilitate communication across the regions and among the state teams, the Rural Sociological Society's Task Force has launched a Pathways from Poverty Newsletter. This quarterly publication carries information about the activities of state teams.

It also identifies resources that may be useful to state teams, including potential funding sources, and alerts team members to conferences and meetings of other organizations that may be of interest to them.

● Spirit of Pathways from Poverty Initiative—Cooperation, Collaboration.

The spirit of the Pathways from Poverty Project is "Let's come together and create innovative pathways from poverty for rural people and places." Each state team consists of representatives of government, the private sector, non-profit organizations and university research and extension faculty. By working together, with each group contributing its unique resources, we can create better solutions to the burdens of poverty. Moreover, teams must reach out to other groups within their states to broaden the base of participation in the challenge of creating pathways from poverty.

In a land as rich as America, poverty is simply not acceptable. No child should have to go to bed hungry. No elderly person should suffer ill health when treatment is available. No family should have to live in a shelter for the homeless when there are houses standing empty.

In a land of plenty, poverty is an unnecessary source of agony in the lives of too many people. Poverty produces needless suffering. It results in a loss of human dignity. It is a drain on the economies of communities, of states, of the regions, and the nation. We must find ways to reduce this loss of human and economic resources.

● A Vision of What Could Be.

How do we make such a dream come true? First, we have to have a vision of what could be. Then, we must have the commitment to make it so. The challenge that lies before us is to create a vision of what life ought to be for individuals, families and communities who are this moment living with the burdens of poverty. What are the hopes of these people and places? What is their vision and ours of how to turn their hopes into realities? By working together—business leaders, government officials, educators, grassroots leaders, and poor people—we can create pathways from poverty.

Let us all say to my friend in Mississippi, "Henry, poverty is not your problem. It is our problem. It is America's problem. And we are going to do something about it!"

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1 - PROFILES

The research community working on rural poverty issues is a rather eclectic group. One undeniable characteristic of each individual, however, is that they care. The following profiles of the plenary session presentors from the Northeast Region's Pathways from Poverty Conference, and of the Pathways visionary, Gene Summers, capture some of that caring.

Each of these persons is concerned for the future of rural Americans living in poverty. The vision of these individuals goes far beyond their college campuses, classes, and research; the underlying goal of their work is to help. Many of them can truly understand the frustrations and hurt because they have been there themselves. . .

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What we need to study and look for are ways to help people get out of poverty rather than just studying who the poor are and how big their problem is. - Gene Summers

UP FROM "THE BOTTOMS"

- by Eileen Zuber

In a democracy, people who live in rural areas should not be penalized politically or economically because of where they live. We ought to be working to minimize the inequalities not only spatially but also in terms of gender, in terms of race and ethnicity. If I could change the world, I would wipe out the inequality that exists between regions, races and genders, so that all people would have equal opportunity—politically, economically, and educationally.

These are the words of Gene Summers, the visionary behind the Pathways from Poverty Initiative. In a recent interview, I had the pleasure of learning more about the man who is dedicating the rest of his life to this effort. Gene Summers . . . Who is he? Where did he come from? How has he acquired such strong convictions about helping the less fortunate people in rural areas? Summers tells me that it all began a long, long time ago on a little farm in southeast Missouri . . .

"I was born on a forty acre farm," Summers said. "At least that's what it was called — hardly enough to be more than a truck patch, in southeast Missouri, down in the swamps. Folks called it the bottoms: a low area that had been pretty much drained by the CCC back in the `30s and flooded every spring. My family and I lived in a little two-room shack with no electricity. It was strictly animal and elbow grease that ran the place—no gasoline powered equipment on the farm at all. Mom made most of our clothes from feed sacks, and, occasionally, she'd buy a piece of cloth at the general store in town to make us overalls. I lived there for the first ten years of my life, from 1936 until the end of World War II, and it was real poverty. Years later, when I was in my late teens or early twenties, I discovered that my dad in all the years up until the end of World War II said he'd never made more than two hundred dollars cash income in any one year."

This is how Gene Summers began to describe the early years of his life to me—the years that ultimately influenced how he would look at the world around him.

"When I was real small—first-, second-, and third-grade—it troubled me that hard working honest people like my parents and a few other neighbors living down in the bottoms worked like the 'Dickens,' and yet were living pretty low in terms of income and material circumstances," Summers said. "I realized there were people around us that were doing much better, people who seemed to be doing okay, and so from a very early age, I sort of had this analytical inquisitiveness of wanting to know why so much difference existed between the way people lived. Why was life so much harder on some than others?"

Although Summers' father couldn't read or write and his mother only had an eighth-grade education, his parents tremendously valued education and encouraged Summers to do well in school. From their point of view, education was a way to get out of being poor, and so with the support and kind encouragement from them and others—aunts, uncles, and family friends—Summers worked very hard. "Fortunately, even in the little one-room school house that I attended, I did well," Summers said.

At about the age of eleven, Summers and his family moved to Cape Girardeau, Missouri, a small city of about 20,000 in the late '40s. His father went to work in a cement factory as a day laborer, working for about sixty-five cents per hour.

"We still didn't have any money," Summers said. "The house that we lived in was literally a couple of chicken houses that had been pulled together at one time, sealed inside, and had siding put on the outside. That was our house in town until I was seventeen or eighteen, when I graduated from high school and went off to college."

Summers headed off to the University of Tennessee hoping to become a forest ranger, but by the end of his sophomore year, a weakness in color vision made him realize it wouldn't be possible; that's when he switched his major to psychology. Throughout undergraduate school, Summers worked full-time. It was "Dub" Jones, a professor in the sociology department, who encouraged Summers to apply for a three-year fellowship funded through the National Defense Education Act. As a recipient of this fellowship, Summers was able to pursue graduate studies in sociology without having to juggle working full-time in addition to serving in his role as husband, and father to three children of his own by this time.

Summers' general area of interest in graduate school was social psychology, and for the first ten years of his post doctorate, his faculty appointments were basically to teach social psychology courses and sometimes a community course. His first teaching job at Indiana State University was teaching social psychology and industrial psychology. Summers also taught for two summers at Vanderbilt and then applied for and received an National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) Post-doctoral Fellowship to do a year of work at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, with Ed Borgatta, one of the leaders in social psychology back in the '50s and '60s.

For the next five years following that, Summers taught courses in social psychology, research methods, statistics, and sociology of education at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. While at Illinois, Summers and a few of his colleagues received a large grant to study the effect rural industrialization, specifically the construction of a steel mill, had on the community of Hennepin in northern Illinois. Summers was primarily studying the attitudes and psychological disposition of people in the community. "This was when Cal Beale and Glenn

Fuguitt [rural demographers and sociologists] and others were studying Rural Renaissance, during that ten-year period from 1960-70, when for the first time in the history of the United States, there were more people moving from urban areas to rural areas," he said.

The rural sociology department at the University of Wisconsin became interested in Summers' research work, and asked him to join their faculty as a rural sociologist. "So—basically, I got into rural sociology by accident," he said. "I was just doing research on rural industrialization and the folks at Wisconsin were interested in putting that into their program. So—I kind of came in through the back door or sneaked in."

For the last twenty-five years, Summers has been studying how industry affects communities, particularly the working class, the blue collar and low-income people in communities, the underemployed and unemployed. Yet, the reality of Summers' struggles and that of his family and friends hadn't appeared to him so vividly as it did the day he visited the people of the Mississippi Delta region as a member of the National Rural Studies Committee back in the spring of 1989. "Looking, seeing and hearing about the poverty from the people in the Mississippi Delta region just brought back all the childhood recollections of how terrible things were. It didn't look like there had been a heck of a lot of improvement from the stand point of the low income people, and, in that part of the country, it included a lot of people of African-American heritage. So—I came back from that meeting, and said, by golly, I'm going to try to use my presidential year [of the Rural Sociological Society] to put rural poverty back on the agenda of not only rural sociologists but social scientists. It was apparent that the amount of poverty in rural areas, urban areas, too, was increasing, where as from the late '60s until the late '80s, with the efforts of 'The Great Society,' and 'War on Poverty,' there had been a trend towards a decline."

The first thing that Summers did was organize a task force on persistent rural poverty in order to assess the current theories about poverty, to see why poverty was increasing, and to examine just what went wrong. The task force published their findings in a report entitled, *Persistent Poverty in Rural America*, published by Westview Press. In addition to citing poverty statistics, it discusses who the rural poor are, recaps the history of government policy that has affected rural poverty, and touches upon the theories that attempt to explain why poverty is so persistent in non-metropolitan areas.

"When we finished that report, some members of the task force wanted to continue on in a more policy education mode," Summers said, "and so I went back to the Kellogg Foundation and asked them if they'd be willing to fund a continuing effort. That's when we came up with the title 'Pathways from Poverty,' which again just reflects what has been my view all throughout my career—that what we need to study and look for are ways to help people get out of poverty rather than just studying who the poor are and how big their problem is." *Pathways* focuses on these ways through research, teaching and action programs. The Southern Rural Development Center organized the first *Pathways from Poverty* workshop, which was held in Memphis, September 1993. With additional funding from the Kellogg

Foundation, the other three Regional Rural Development Centers replicated and modified the *Pathways* workshop for their respective region. Through these workshops, state teams have been formed to help rural communities address poverty issues.

I asked Summers what he enjoys most about his work, and he said, "seeing other people in the academic world, policy arena and the grassroots action world pick up the concerns for social justice, seeing them make things happen, seeing them become excited and concerned about the people who are not generally served well by our political and economic educational systems—whether they're minority, racial or ethnic, or whether they're low income poor whites. It doesn't make that much difference from my point of view. If democracy is going to work, then it has to work for everybody not just the people who are fortunate enough to have power and influence. So—when I see other people getting excited about doing things such as our *Pathways from Poverty* workshop, or our state teams, that's great. That's what we need, and we need a lot more of it. I do the writing and the research because I think that providing information is absolutely the fundamental grassroots foundation of a democracy. People have to have information to make reasonable decisions, decisions that are based on factual reality and not on myth. There's so much prejudice in the world. What's most satisfying about my work is watching people actually use information with action to benefit people. People who live in rural areas should not, in a democracy, be penalized politically or economically because of where they live. We ought to be working to minimize the inequalities not only spatially but also in terms of gender, in terms of race and ethnicity. If I could change the world, I would wipe out the inequality that exists between regions, races and genders, so that all people would have equal opportunity—politically, economically, and educationally."

Summers admitted that saying everyone should be equal is like saying that everyone should be honest. "We will probably never reach the point where every living human being is indeed honest," he said, "but we can't give up the goal and keep working towards it, because if you do give up, the odds are not very good. So — I feel much the same way with equality. We probably are never going to achieve total equality, but we certainly ought to continue to work towards trying to achieve this goal and get as close as we possibly can."

> I'm very unhappy and still am very troubled with a society that doesn't create opportunities for people on the basis of their ability rather than on the basis of their skin color, or gender, or parents income level. That's just such a waste, both for the individual and for society. -- *Gene Summers*

Searching through his memories, back to his days spent in a one-room school house, Gene recalls two classmates, Stacey and Jimmy Lee, who were very bright, did very well in school, had always scored higher on tests than he, but because of the circumstances of their lives will never realize the full capacity of their abilities. Jimmy Lee's father had been killed in a factory accident when Jimmy Lee was in third grade, and though Jimmy Lee finished high school, he worked all the time to help out his mother, and his younger brother and sister. Summers recalls that the last time he saw Jimmy, he was working in the butcher shop in a Croger's Store. Stacey married, settled down and had a family. Summers said that one of the things that motivates him in this push for equality is his memory of his classmates. "I've often wondered how many other kids there are out there like Stacey and Jimmy Lee. I know there are lots of other kids like that who are just as bright as can be but by the time they're high school age, teenagers, their opportunities have gone down to about zip to be able to go on and use the intellectual ability they have. It does not mean that they're not doing honest work and maybe quite satisfied with their role in life, but we've lost as a society. We've lost the talent that those people had, and remembering that childhood experience has always been a frustration for me, that we waste so much talent in society; and sometimes it's the women, sometimes it's minority groups where the losses are more concentrated, white males tend to do a little better, but if they grow up in a rural area, they may not do so well, or if they have to grow up in a low income family where the family needs them to work, they don't get the chances to go on and use their talents. So — I'm very unhappy and still am very troubled with a society that doesn't create opportunities for people on the basis of their ability rather than on the basis of their skin color, or gender, or parents income level. That's just such a waste, both for the individual and for society."

Summers is determined to devote the rest of his working days towards furthering *Pathways from Poverty* work and is hopeful and excited that something useful will emerge out of the work of the state teams and urges everyone to keep *plugging away* for the good of society and equality of humankind.

These women need support, and they can't get it . . . These are women who if they had the opportunity they would be speaking instead of me. - Virginia Schein on women in poverty

Dancing With Words

- an Afternoon with Virginia Schein -

- by Eileen Zuber

It was a great moment for me—a true feeling for humanity. Here were women speaking with hope and fear at the same time. I thought, 'A mountain is a mountain,' whether it was me striving for my doctorate in psychology [years ago] with all the hopes and fears that came with that achievement or these women striving for their GED with all the hopes and fears at what life with these skills might bring them. Then the 'otherness' disappeared. We were all women, we were all mothers, we were all one.

—Virginia Schein

Such are the words of Virginia Schein as she described a defining moment in her life, a moment which altered her direction of research from focusing on work issues of women in management to examining work issues of poor single mothers within the context of their life circumstances. Schein's research ultimately led her to author the book Working from the Margins: Voices of Mothers in Poverty, which formed the basis of her Pathways from Poverty presentation.

Schein took time out of her busy schedule as professor and chair of the management department at Gettysburg College to meet with me and share how her work has evolved from that of a corporate researcher and leader to academic administrator, professor, advisor and advocate of women in poverty. Schien told me that as she looks back, she sees her work as a natural progression, though she admits that her colleagues find it professionally intriguing that someone with her interests would move into this area.

I asked Schein to describe her childhood and early years of college. I was interested in the passion she so evidently displayed. "I just did the sort of things all children do, I guess," she began. "I've always been an avid reader. My mother tells stories of me coming home from the library with piles of books. At about the age of nine, I asked her to buy me a book about FDR. I went to Cornell to study English. I wanted to be a journalist. [But when] I took an organizational psychology class, I just fell in love with it. I discovered I really liked the experimental research process. I didn't know much about the field because it wasn't really discussed. I didn't know there were far more men working in it than women. I had a woman professor as a role model. All I knew was that I loved the field and wanted to work in the world."

Schein graduated from Cornell in 1965, with a bachelor of arts, cum laude. She continued her studies at New York University and was the first woman there to graduate with a doctorate of philosophy in organizational psychology. "In 1969, there were very few women in the field," she said. "In the early post-graduate years of my career, I learned the value of empirical research." Schein worked heavily in empirical research and statistics at a corporation of corporate management in New York. "The theme in 1973," she said, "was think management: think male; only 5% of all managers in business then were women. I thought something must be amiss. That research pulled me."

Schein conducted the first major corporate study in the United States of effects of sex role stereotyping on women's entry into management. Her research was replicated in China, Japan, Germany and Great Britain. Schein was responsible for implementing an employee attitude survey program at Metropolitan Life headquarters and all decentralized operations. She also was responsible for developing equitable selection, promotion and appraisal procedures for clerical and managerial personnel there. Always, her desire was to change the workplace to make it better for all employees, men and women, and as director of Personnel Research at Metropolitan Life, she did just that.

In 1975, Schein and a research staff working under her direction at Metropolitan Life conducted the first study of the effects of flex-time on productivity, then implemented the first large-scale corporate flexible working hours program in New York City for 20,000 employees of Metropolitan Life. The idea took about one year to incorporate. Schein recalled the effect of it: "Riding home from work on the subway, I overheard a young man telling a companion that he and his wife had just had a baby; he was happy with the flex-time system because now he was able to play with their baby before she was put to bed for the evening. I was thinking: that's one of our employees. It was a good feeling, knowing that I

was helping to improve the quality of life for co-workers."

Schein presented testimony on the positive outcomes of flex-time on worker productivity before the Committee on Governmental Affairs, U.S. Senate. She designed and conducted national seminars for business leaders on protecting the privacy rights of employees. She designed and conducted seminars for business leaders in the United States and Great Britain on improving the status of women in management, and participated in various media interviews and commentaries advocating women's rights in the workplace. For nearly thirty years, Schein concerned herself with the low status of women in management. "low status of women in management or low status of women in poverty, the issues seemed connected," Schein said. "One is concerned with breaking the 'glass ceiling' the other the 'basement ceiling.'"

Writers, like sociologists and psychologists, yearn to find meaning in everyday life. They concern themselves with history and biography and understanding the relations between the two. And so it was that I wanted to know what circumstances led Schein to become concerned with issues related to breaking the "basement ceiling." She told me that it was the very rurality of Gettysburg itself, the place where she now works and resides, and her belief in modeling what she preaches to her students—in this case, community service. Schien explained, "You need to wear many hats in a small community [such as Gettysburg] with fewer professionals to do the work that needs to be done."

In addition to wearing the hat of a daughter, wife, mother, academic administrator, professor, advisor, and researcher, Schein also served on the Job Training and Partnership Act's (JTPA) Private Industry Council (PIC) of Franklin and Adams counties and served as a member of the board of directors of Survivors, Inc., a shelter for battered women. In regards to community service, Schein said, "The time I commit to community service serves as a model to my undergraduates. Students won't understand people who are different from them [until they get to know them.] We need to encourage students to tap into community service for mutual learning. We need to open the door and provide opportunities for them. Gettysburg College has a big community service program. It's extremely important."

"My ideas [for my book, Working from the Margins: Voices of Mothers in Poverty] came from direct experience working in the community with women unlike myself," Schein said. "Through 'Survivors,' I became more aware of domestic violence. For me, it became an issue and gave me new insights. I would pick up a newspaper and read very negative things about 'welfare mothers.' I thought I needed to do something. The women I'm reading about aren't the women I'm meeting. I couldn't find the 'welfare mother.' Stereotypes are not bred in reality. A part of my approach was to capture these women's voices and get them out to dispel the pervading myth [that welfare mothers are lazy, immoral and unwilling to work] which has captured the press and is expelled from the mouths of politicians in efforts to cut welfare. [And to dispel the myth that] 'poverty consists primarily of women of color.' Poverty is broad and affects all

Then the 'otherness' disappeared. We were all women, we were all mothers, we were all one.
- Virginia Schein on hearing women speak at a Job Training and Partnership Act graduation ceremony

kinds of people. I wanted to open people's hearts and minds with reason to the real issues -- that these women are struggling, destitute, and in personal pain. I started thinking about the multiple issues affecting these women. Then my emotions changed from empathy to anger."

"I believe strongly that we're on the wrong path in society. We need to see these women as they really are—struggling to make ends meet. It's a complex issue, raising a child alone. These women need support, and they can't get it. These issues are so powerful. They are issues of social justice. We need to break the stereotypes and come up with different kinds of solutions. These are women who if they had the opportunity they would be speaking instead of me. It's just the luck of the draw. I thought: more people need to hear the issues. I wanted to capture a holistic picture of these women." To do this, Schein turned to research.

"Research has always been the basis of change for me," Schein said. "In 1990, I began an exploration with not-for-profits and carried out the research through 1992. I spoke with executive directors and private industry involved in the Job Training and Partnership Act (JTPA). I attended the JTPA graduation ceremonies and listened to these women's stories. I heard the pride in their voices at earning their general equivalency diploma (GED). It was a great moment for me—a true feeling for humanity. Here were women speaking with hope and fear at the same time. I thought, 'A mountain is a mountain,' whether it was me striving for my doctorate in psychology [years ago] with all the hopes and fears that came with that achievement or these women striving for their GED with all the hopes and fears at what life with these skills might bring them. Then the 'otherness' disappeared. We were all women, we were all mothers, we were all one."

"In following my heart," Schein said, "I designed a study of 'compassion in context.' I looked at issues pertaining to poor single mothers and work within the context of their history and social circumstances. The contextual approach puts outcomes in perspective and brings to the forefront the various factors—individual, historical, and societal—that impinge on a situation. With such information, we can design and implement approaches that can effectively facilitate the women's exit from poverty and their entrance into lives of dignity and opportunity."

"In gathering the stories, it was as if I held in my hand a translucent round gemstone with many different colored facets. If I turned it one way, one aspect was prominent. As I turned it another way, a different facet sparkled at me. And the more I turned it, the more I saw its depth and complexity. Each woman's story contributed to the development of the larger picture, with its common themes, that emerged from the research process."

Throughout the course of the afternoon that I spent with Schein, I marveled at the passion and depth of concern she expressed for these women. I told her how inspiring it was for me and others to attend her presentation at the Pathways workshop and how enjoyable it was for me to be able to share this afternoon with her. Then, being the writer that I am, I nudged her to tell me the secret to her expressive nature. "I care," she said, emphatically. "The issues are real. If I could get just one person to read the book and help someone because of it, it would make a difference."

"I know," I said. "But there's something else here. I know other people who care, but who don't express it with such passion."

Schein thought for a moment. "I'm at the level in my career where I don't have to prove myself anymore. I'm secure in whom I am. That makes all the difference."

"Still," I prompted. "Your gestures are so graceful, so expressive. What's your secret?"

Schein smiled at me and said, "Well, from first through twelfth grade, I took ballet lessons." She paused. "Only now I'm dancing with words."

SEARCHING FROM WITHIN

- by Pete Saba

For most people, Tennessee is Nashville, the capital of the state and of country music, and Memphis, the home of Graceland. However, bordered by the winding greatness of the Mississippi River to the West, and by the wondrous beauty of the Appalachian and Great Smoky Mountains to the East, Tennessee is incredibly diverse geographically, socially, and economically. The rest of Appalachias is equally diverse, yet all of the states share a similar situation with John Gaventa's home state of Tennessee; the rural areas have not escaped the problems of poverty. Nevertheless, people in rural places have the power to provide for a brighter future with some aid from those around them. Fortunately, many people like John Gaventa have been working not only at the academic level, but ultimately with people at the community level, to help solve problems of poverty.

Now a professor of Sociology at the University of Tennessee, Gaventa's work and experience in rural poverty began and continues today in Appalachia and the South. While tracing his Tennessee roots back seven generations, Gaventa said that his initial intrigue in issues of rural poverty sprouted when he was an undergraduate student majoring in sociology and political science at Vanderbilt University. While volunteering in a student service project in Appalachia, he became curious by the extreme incongruity of wealth distribution in that area. "I looked at the whole question of why was there so much poverty amidst so much wealth. While Appalachia was such a rich region having massive coal and other natural resources, it also had some of the poorest people in the country."

Upon graduating from Vanderbilt, Gaventa traveled abroad to attend graduate school at Oxford University in England, where he received his doctorate of philosophy in politics. Just before he went to England, Gaventa was asked by residents in a poor Appalachian community in Tennessee if he could spend some time investigating who the hidden owners were of the British Coal company that owned the land and vast resources in their area, and whose environmental, social, and political actions were of great concern. Gaventa spent much of the next few years researching and documenting the links between financial power in London and community conditions in Appalachia, and helping the community use the information to raise concerns to the landowners and broader public.

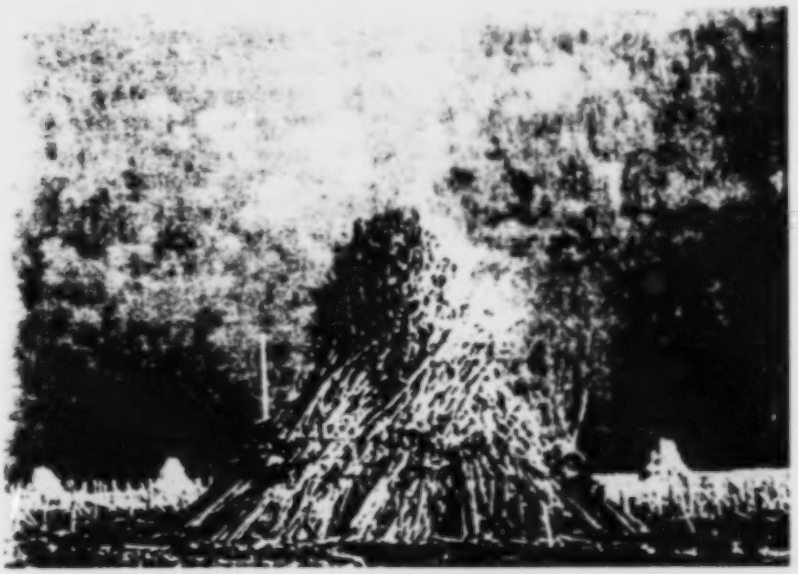
His accumulated research became Gaventa's first publication, the book Power and Powerlessness in an Appalachian Valley. This book has sold over 25,000 copies since publication and continues to be used in political science and sociology classes at universities nationwide. Besides the tremendously successful outcome of the project, Gaventa noted the uniqueness this opportunity provided him while at Oxford. "While working directly with and in the community, I also had the university atmosphere where I could take

From the beginning, my work has always been trying to link or build bridges between scholarship, sociology, and the universities in general to the actual communities being dealt with. - John Gaventa

this research and study it from both a theoretical and sociological point of view. So—from the very beginning, my work has always been trying to link or build bridges between scholarship, sociology, and the universities in general to the actual communities being dealt with: serving the people in the communities, which therefore fulfills the roles of these institutions."

Gaventa immediately became involved with the Highlander Research and Education Center upon his return to the states. Devoted to the cooperative partnership and support of grassroots communities throughout Appalachia, the Highlander Center is based in New Market, Tennessee, where it has been active for sixty years. Invited by the center to construct a research program that would both study and serve the needs of various low-income communities in the region, Gaventa devoted his energies to doing just that—for the next twenty years of his life. However, wanting to link his work in these rural communities back to scholarship, Gaventa sought an academic appointment, which led him to the University of Tennessee. It was only three years ago that he relinquished his role at the Highlander Center in order to devote his full energies to the university.

Gaventa's direct contact with rural communities, though, did not subside. While co-teaching a graduate course entitled "Community Development in a Global Context," he also has created yet another program, The Community Partnership Center. Bringing the research of different departments and colleges in the university together, this new interdisciplinary center then applies the outcome of the fused research directly to the needs of local communities.



Today, sociologists are placing special emphasis on power relationships in our nation and how they affect the everyday lives of ordinary people. The concept of power has been a dominant theme confronted by Gaventa as well in his work and vast portfolio of publications. Through his direct contact with the citizens of the rural communities, his analyses have led him to reconsider methods of studying power relationships, and therefore, how to achieve a more ideal democratic system. "Imperfect power leads to inequalities and therefore an imperfect democracy. Sociology has always studied power but from an overview of 'looking down' from a detached position. I think we need to start 'looking up' from the position of the powerless themselves to truly understand how it affects their lives. Until we do this type of analysis, it is very difficult to figure out how we can build a more participatory and democratic society."

Gaventa's sees many similarities between his current project, the Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community Learning Initiative, and the Pathways from Poverty Initiative. The Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community (EZ/EC) program was signed into being by President Clinton in 1993 and represents the most extensive federal community

development program of this decade. The EZ/EC program strives to fulfill four specific goals: (1) promoting economic opportunity, (2) sustainable community development, (3) community-based partnerships, and (4) a strategic vision for change. The EZ/EC Learning Initiative, which is based at the Community Partnership Center at the University of Tennessee is a project that brings together grassroots citizens, agencies and government to measure and monitor the program, and document the lessons learned from it. Gaventa sees both the EZ/EC Learning Initiative and Pathways from Poverty as a step forward as far as collaboration at a number of different levels. "This project that we are working on now is very consistent with the Pathways' approach. I think that what is so exciting about Pathways is its attempt to bring together community, scholars, and both state and local government to figure out in collaboration how to achieve certain goals. This is absolutely needed. These problems are too big for any group or sector to confront alone. In short, the Pathways program is promoting the essential task of implementing a participatory approach."

Gaventa came North with this enthusiasm for Pathways, and with his philosophy on the need for collaboration and links at all levels, to the Pathways from Poverty Workshop for the Northeast Region in September of 1995. The union of scholars, researchers and others involved in the development of rural America characterized the essence of Gaventa's keynote address entitled "Working Together for a Change: Social Capital as a Pathway from Poverty," which expressed the primary attitude and approach Gaventa carries towards *all* of his work, whether it be as a sociologist at the University of Tennessee or as an active participant in the affairs of the actual communities he studies. "I think sociology and other disciplines work best when adopting a model that doesn't conduct research on the people but with the people of a given community," Gaventa said. "Learning from their first-hand experience and sharing our knowledge is the collaborative atmosphere and partnership role that facilitates understanding, thus acting upon issues of rural development."

In the fall of 1996, Gaventa assumed a fellowship with the Institute for Development Studies based at the University of Sussex, England, to study communities of impoverished third-world countries. While he plans to maintain his focus on participatory methods of development by grassroots communities, he would like to place it in an international context. "We have a lot to learn from the issues affecting other parts of the world, which closely parallel our own. This comparative work is imperative for gaining new insight."

As for a general vision for rural America, Gaventa's sentiments revert back to two dominate themes that occupy his work: power relationships and collaborative action. "While the traditional economic base of rural communities is collapsing, we must stay aware of their strengths as well, which include a long history of community organizing, leadership and economic development not to mention experience gained over the years. Finding better policies that empower these communities will revive these strengths and give them adequacy to deal better with their own problems. I don't think that the answers are going to come from outside the communities but rather from within."

A slightly greater percentage of families live below the poverty line in rural areas (10.1 percent) than in urban areas (9.9 percent). - 1990 Census

Students bolt from Berkeley Avenue Elementary school, their pent up energy released to the outside world for gym class. Their voices, long since hushed inside classrooms, burst with joy as the kids head for the playing fields. As they approach the gate to the fields though, it becomes apparent that something is wrong. A shift in the breeze carries away the sweet smell of gym class freedom. The gate is shackled. Though only in the fourth grade, Leif Jensen stares at a sign dangling from the gate: *"This entrance is closed—use nigger entrance."* Jensen vividly recalls how shocked and upset he felt at reading that sign.

Bridging the Gap

by Steve Nelson

Inequality. For everyone, the word conjures up images, memories and emotions. For Leif Jensen, inequality was, before that day on the playground, little more than "white noise." Growing up in the mid-nineteen-sixties near Sand Road, the border to the ghetto section of Westwood, New Jersey, Jensen realized that, "there was not great racial tension in our area," although he attended the only elementary school in his district with a substantial population of African-American students. As racial tensions began to crescendo in America, Jensen discussed issues such as racial and economic inequality around the dinner table with his parents and two older brothers, and was aware of the class and economic differences among kids in his own town. Growing up in a decade when just six letters—MLK [Matin Luther King] and KKK [Klu Klux Klan]—were enough to ignite fiery emotions, it was inevitable that Jensen would become affected personally. He remembers that time vividly. The hatred emblazoned across that sign, warning the children to use the entrance on Sand Road, would be a shock to most ten-year-olds. For Jensen, it was not only his first encounter with the horrors of prejudice, but it also may have been a harsh introduction to his studies of inequality.

Today, Jensen is an associate professor of rural sociology at Penn State with a joint appointment in the University's population research institute. He began studying rural sociology, "kind of by chance more than anything else," and, with his childhood roots firmly planted in the urban soil of New Jersey, it is difficult to believe that Jensen studies *rural* sociology. "In fact," he said while gazing out of his office window, "two houses down from where I grew up, there was a tall pine tree, and, if you climbed to the top of it, you could see the top of the Empire State building." Reared in the lengthy shadows of New York City, Jensen could have climbed that pine tree, turned to any compass direction and still have never seen anything that would paint a typical *rural* landscape for anyone.

Pondering my own childhood, I realized that my exploration of rural poverty began on a trip when I was a teenager. A turn onto Maryland state road 46 on a canoe trip was my first lesson in rural Appalachia. That turn also forced me to realize that there were people who woke up every morning to the demanding questions raised by poverty in rural areas not just in our cities.

As our canoe-, kayak-, and people-laden car wearily climbed a sharp curve away from the town of Westernport, Maryland, near the confluence of the Savage and North Branch of the Potomac Rivers, the noise and vibration began. *CRRR*, the sound of the car tires skating across gravel drowned out the thumping beat of the stereo; at the time, I laughed to myself—a state road made of gravel. As we wound up hair pin turns, across small streams and further up the canyon of the North Branch, my amusement faded as houses revealed themselves. Clinging stubbornly to steep hillsides, the

houses might have been abandoned, but I sensed a strong and willful presence of people. I failed to fit a storyline to the backdrop—to the dwellings with no faces—to these pockets of poverty in rural Appalachia. Hidden on roads with names like Walnut Bottom and Seldom Seen, these dwellings might have been choice locales for living when mining, industry and logging ruled Garret County but no longer. Though only a teenager on my first trip to this area of Western Maryland, I wondered what the people who lived here did for a living. How did they survive? I dreamed aloud that someday I would live secluded on the banks of a river in rugged woods . . . but what kind of job could I find?

What kind of work could I expect to find in an area like Garret County? For most people, the word poverty means inner-city desperation. Desolate job opportunities plague many of our metropolitan areas, but the truth is that a slightly greater percentage of families live below the poverty line in rural areas (10.1 percent) than in urban areas (9.9 percent - 1990 Census). In Maryland, the state average was only 6 percent of families below the poverty line. However, in Garret County, where all 28,238 people live in rural areas, it stood at 11.6 percent. Though I was unaware of these statistics that day on Maryland route 46, I sensed that the area had a lack of employment opportunities.

I like to think of my work as bridging the gap between the faceless numbers that demographers have, and the numberless faces that anthropologists are used to talking about.
- Leif Jensen

Jensen is currently involved in studying the availability of jobs in rural areas such as Garret County, with specific concern for the logistics of welfare reform which force millions of welfare recipients to be working within two years. Jensen has done preliminary work with Penn State graduate student, Yoshimi Chitose, in estimating the number of jobs that are actually available for this segment of the population. By studying data from the 1994 Current Population Survey, Jensen and Chitose found that, with the passing of *Workfare*, as few as eighteen but up to as many as fifty-four people (including present welfare recipients) could be vying for each available job. "I think that this work is very important," Jensen said, "in that it suggests that the root causes of poverty might be something other than the individual characteristics of the poor. If we are really going to do something about the problem, we have to think about innovative ways to somehow generate employment in rural areas," he paused before stressing, "not *'just'* employment but something that pays more than minimum wage."

Along with Dan Lichter, a sociology professor and director of the Population Research Institute at Penn State, Jensen took that message to a group composed primarily of congressional and legislative aides. As part of the Pathways from Poverty effort, this presentation in February was one means for informing policy makers that a lack of work ethic is not the sole reason for dependence on welfare. Jensen hopes that, "maybe the message got out to some [of the political aides]," for if this work is to really make an impact, the reality that, "you just can't expect welfare recipients to work without doing something about providing jobs for them," must find its way into legislation.

Concern for how his work could impact welfare legislation, however, was not amongst the scribbles on a faded, yellow notebook page from early in Jensen's academic career. He studied chemistry in his first semester at Castleton State College and continued with chemistry after transferring to the University of Vermont. The memory of the pungent odor of chemicals drifted into his nose as Jensen remembered the rough curriculum and dry lectures. While losing daily battles against the amines and the phenols of his organic chemistry class, Jensen was taking an introduction to sociology class and was struck with the realization that social inequality was more than just a topic for dinner conversation. "I realized, 'Wow—there is this science that actually deals with these very problems' and I felt like this is what I

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If we are really going to do something about the problem, we have to think of innovative ways to somehow generate employment in rural areas . . . not 'just' employment, but something that pays more than minimum wage. - Leif Jensen

wanted to do." Recalling his assessment of the situation, Jensen raised his hands like a balance and weighed the merits of sociology in his right hand above those of chemistry in his left. "This science [sociology], in my estimation," he said while raising his right hand and grinning, "is just as valuable or more valuable than this science [chemistry] . . . and this science is far more interesting to me."

From chemistry to sociology. From substances to societies. His discovery of sociology and the about face in his academic studies came as a surprise to Jensen. He realizes today, however, that childhood discussions with his parents continued to evolve into more complex observations on the nature of inequality. After Jensen's junior year of high school, his father, John, who was working as a commercial artist for an advertising agency, and his mother, Dagny, "decided to get out of the rat race." With his father's water color paintings in Vermont and New York art galleries, a big jump from Westwood, New Jersey, to Orwell, Vermont, ensued. The highly urban environment of Northeastern New Jersey was supplanted by a safer, yet more *deep poverty* stricken community in Vermont. The New Jersey county that, "had twice the population of Vermont," was replaced by a small town that had, "a ratio of about six cows to every person," thus Jensen began to make acute observations about small town life. "Maybe the move also gave me an interest in rural issues," Jensen said, feathering a hand through his sandy brown hair as he recalled his senior year of high school in Vermont. "You could see these stark differences between the kids that were my friends in New Jersey and those in Vermont," Jensen remembered. Perhaps his observations about the contrasting problems, opportunities and outlooks of the people in New Jersey and those in Vermont were the catalyst to strengthen Jensen's inclination for rural issues as he realized *"how all the things that I was interested in might somehow be different in rural areas."* It all came together at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Along the way to earning a masters and doctorate in sociology, Jensen held research assistantships with rural sociology professors, which led to his current area of study. Looking back to those people in rural Vermont who lived in deep poverty, Jensen could now hope to make a difference.

Today, living in 'Happy Valley,' home of Penn State, Jensen is still surrounded by rural country. If he were to get that childhood urge to climb a tree top while traversing through the forests and gamelands that cradle the farm lands and the college town of State College, the most impressive building he would see is Beaver Stadium, home of the legendary Nittany Lion football team. For Jensen, his wife and their three children, these woods offer a refuge from paved roads and academia. As one who enjoys "hiking up and down mountains and through forests," Jensen could not have settled into a much better position. Nestled back into his office in the Armsby Building, surrounded by journals, magazines and one of his father's water-color paintings, Jensen talked about the evolution of his research. "Actually I don't think I have changed very much. Since the beginning, my interest in sociology and demography has been motivated by social problems that need to be addressed. So—a lot of my work has been policy oriented," he paused, searching for the right explanation, "maybe not to evaluate specific policies but to fully describe the dimensions of various social problems, so at least we know what we are dealing with." Jensen seemed to reevaluate his commitment to problems of inequality and looked at me assuredly before continuing, "that interest--you can see in my work right from the beginning."

Realizing that what he studies can be of value to people is something that Jensen tries to always hold on to. I asked him how he manages to do so when he primarily analyzes data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau and infrequently takes part in data collection or field studies. "The data that I am used to dealing with," he replied, spreading his arms wide, "has one long string of numbers that represents the information for one individual—and you know, you deal with the numbers and the different statistical techniques for analyzing the data and you forget that there are faces behind each of those strings of numbers." He fondly remembered something he had said to an old colleague, "I like to think of my work as bridging the gap between the faceless numbers that demographers have, and the numberless faces that anthropologists are used to talking about." Jensen then revealed that, "[you're right] it is easy to sit here in State College and forget that what we are interested in is people."

Somewhere in a rural county outside of State College, however, people are benefiting from Jensen's work. Hopefully his study on the logistics of *Workfare* and similar research elsewhere will help to illuminate the problems of rural poverty. Only when the faceless numbers turn to optimistic futures will Jensen's hopes be fully realized. Until that time, it's reassuring to know that Jensen will always remember that there are faces and stories behind every number.

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2 - PRESENTATIONS

The following transcriptions of presentations from the Pathways from Poverty Workshop Sessions reinforce the importance of the Workshop and of the entire Pathways from Poverty effort.

It is difficult enough to define poverty and determine where the problem is greatest. Pathways from Poverty, however, is meant to go further than that by helping the rural poor to *solve* their problems of rural poverty. The presentations not only provide baseline information on rural poverty problems, but also insight into how we can all work together to create Pathways from Poverty.

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No matter how you examine the statistics, they say the same thing: To think single mother is to think poverty. – Virginia Schein

Working From the Margins: Voices of Mothers in Poverty

-- by Dr. Virginia E. Schein

Dr. Virginia E. Schein, professor and chair of the management department at Gettysburg College, is the author of over 35 articles in scientific and professional journals. Dr. Schein is recognized internationally for her groundbreaking research on sex role stereotypes and requisite management characteristics and also is widely known for her work on enhancing women's opportunities in the workplace and organizational change. This article was taken from a transcription of Dr. Schein's presentation at the Pathways from Poverty conference in September 1995. It is based on the work in her book, Working From the Margins: Voices of Mothers in Poverty (ILR/Cornell, 1995).

Introduction: Facts and Figures

The economic difficulties of women raising children alone have not changed in almost twenty years. They are still almost as likely to live in poverty as not. Currently, 45.7 percent of all female-headed families with children are poor. Of all poor families with children, sixty percent are female-headed. No matter how you examine the statistics they say the same thing: To think single mother is to think poverty.

The Problem with Welfare

The current welfare debate suggests that changing the welfare system and decreasing the welfare rolls will somehow address the problem of poverty among single mothers. But this is a very narrow perspective, one that assumes that the welfare system is the problem. Tinkering with the welfare system and applying the reforms currently being debated—some geared to getting women off welfare and into jobs, often through punitive reforms—won't solve the problem of women in poverty.

Studies have shown that even substantial labor force participation won't necessarily bring single mothers out of poverty, primarily because of the low wages they earn. Single mothers are vulnerable to layoffs, lack important fringe benefits such as paid sick leave, and have high expenses for child care. Many single mothers will remain at or near the poverty level even if they have full time jobs.

By keeping the welfare system and poverty so intertwined, we are asking questions that have little to do with reducing poverty among single mothers. We need to move away from this narrow perspective, as it keeps us on the same merry-go-round of blaming the welfare system and the people in it for the continued rise in welfare costs and the number of welfare recipients. It does not address the causes of poverty or the impoverished circumstances of single mothers. There is nothing wrong with improving a system or reducing its costs, but focusing on changing the welfare system as a way to ameliorate poverty does not make any sense. Our ideal goal would be to help the working poor and hard to employ to escape poverty permanently.

A Broad Perspective

To address seriously the issue of single mothers and their families living in poverty, we need to take a broad perspective, one that asks questions such as: Who are these women? How did they become poor? More importantly, how can we help these poor single mothers move out of poverty and into lives with opportunities for themselves and their children? We need to examine the multiple factors contributing to women's poverty in order to help. We must recognize that changes on all fronts, including the welfare system, are necessary if we are to make progress in the long run. If we are going to successfully tackle the problem of women parenting in poverty, we need to widen our focus on the issue.

Compassion in Context

My research looked at issues pertaining to poor single mothers and worked within the context of their history and social circumstances. This approach moves away from denouncing a person for her circumstances and toward an understanding of such circumstances. This understanding may help in deter-

mining ways to help poor mothers move out of poverty permanently.

The research focused on the individual, and explored in-depth the lives of 30 poor single mothers, developing a rich and comprehensive picture of their lives. A secondary purpose was to present this picture to you through the women's voices.

In completing my research, I wanted to be able to help our society gain a better understanding of the full range of barriers facing poor single mothers. What creates these barriers? How do they interact with the life circumstances of the women? I looked not only at work issues but also at early life experiences, relationships, financial concerns, and child rearing. With such information, we can design and implement approaches that can effectively facilitate women's exit from poverty and entrance into lives of dignity and opportunity.

I would like to bring to you the realities of the women's lives that I studied. I would like to show you how these women's efforts to succeed were cut off by a variety of factors such as child care arrangements; transportation problems; finances; health problems; racial, sexual, and antiwelfare prejudicial remarks; criticisms from family; and incidents of abuse from boyfriends and husbands.

If we are to address the issue of impoverished single mothers, we need to see the whole face of poverty and not focus on just one part. We need to expand our thinking about poor women to include those in small towns as well as inner cities. We also need to untangle race from images of poverty. A single white mother living in a small town is as much a part of the poverty picture as the single black inner-city mother.

The Women

I listened to thirty women talk about working and about their lives as single mothers. The stories they told reflected complexity, pain, and courage in trying to rear children in impoverished circumstances. Each woman was unique in the reasons for her difficulties and how she struggled to overcome them, but there was a commonality among their experiences, circumstances, and attitudes that allowed general themes to emerge. Looking at all the women was the only way to get the full picture of the life of the impoverished single mother.

The average age of the women interviewed was 31.6, with a range of 21 to 42 years. Half of them had one to two children, and the other half had three to five children. Eighteen of the women had been married and twelve had never married. The average age of the woman at the birth of her first child was 19.5, with a range of 15 to 28 years. Sixteen of the women graduated from high school, and fourteen left school before graduation. Of the fourteen who dropped out of school, six have since obtained their general equivalency diploma (GED). Twenty of the women interviewed lived in rural areas and small- to medium-sized towns, and ten lived in cities. Of the group, one-third of the women were women of color, and two-thirds were white women.

This afternoon, I would like to briefly present some of the

outcomes of my research, and to do so primarily in the voices of the women. If I do nothing else, I would like to bring to you the words of these women living in poverty. And second of all, I would like to follow that up with an outline of a three-pronged action framework designed to put these women on paths that will lead them out of poverty permanently.

The ABC's of Single Mothers Living in Poverty

To start with, the most basic of questions: Why are these women living in poverty? I look at it from the perspective of the "ABC's" of poverty for a single mother: A: absence of requisite education and job skills; B: betrayal by the mate; and C: non-supportive families in the early years.

A: Absence of Skills

The women described their job histories and they outlined an array of minimum wage, low-paying jobs without advancement possibilities, but underlying that was also the theme that "I have always worked." Listen to their voices.

Says Sally, "I started working when I was thirteen at a restaurant washing dishes." Says LaVerne, "I've baby-sat, worked in restaurants, on construction, in sewing factories, in food factories, and in the dog bone factory. Most of the jobs paid minimum wage." From Anita, "I waitress. I have always waitressed." And from Jean, "I was a bean cook."

B: Betrayal by the Mate

The betrayal took many forms for these women: domestic violence and physical violence at home was the most common, followed also by drug addiction and alcohol addiction by their spouses, which also helped to drag the women down. Many of the men did not work, and several of the men simply disappeared. I'll read you the story of Amelia. Amelia told me her story sitting in a small, sun-filled living room; pictures of her elementary-school age son and daughter were scattered across

He doesn't know where I am. My children are still afraid. They sleep with the windows closed even in the summer. – Amelia, after leaving an abusive husband

the wall. Her environment gave me no clue as to the story she would tell. "He was an alcoholic. He was never there. When he was there, we never knew when he would come crawling in the door, or who would come crawling in with him. The kids have seen their father out in the front yard just drinking from morning until night. When we were married, he rarely worked. I finally left him. Later on, I went to his house to collect child support, and he and his friends had been drinking. I said, 'Look, I'm not here to cause any trouble, I just want my child support.' I held out my hand, and I got hit. That's the last thing I remember. When I came to, I was in the emergency room. My son, then seven, had run across the street to the neighbors and called 911. My face was destroyed. He had stepped on my face and I don't know to this day if he was the only one that did it. My nose and cheek bones have since been reconstructed. I was a mess. That's a heck of a lot of meanness out of one person. He did it in front of the kids, and that's the only thing I will never forgive him for. I left everything, went to a shelter, and then moved here. He doesn't know where I am. My children are still afraid. They sleep with the windows closed even in the summer. I thought that once you were married, you took your vows until death do you part. I didn't know that he was supposed to kill you."

The women's lives are like "stone soup," in that they are trying to make do with practically nothing . . . Nonetheless, many had some optimistic stories. One woman told how she would take two sheets out, put them on the floor, and then put the food on the floor so they could have a picnic. Stone soup: trying to make do with nothing.

Even without abuse, the women told of other kinds of difficult situations and betrayal. From Jesse: "My husband became a drunk. He was not dependable, and I couldn't count on him. He's a man with problems. He's in and out of hospitals. He never has any money. He comes to see the children but is more of a burden to me than a help, but the kids love him, and I don't talk him down or anything."

From Susan: "When our baby was a year and a half old, I went to work at a truck stop, and my husband just quit work all together. Then I was trying to raise us all. So I left. He is still not working. I guess that will never change."

The absence of skills and the betrayal by the mate are the two key factors in the poverty equation. Betrayed by the mate and lacking the minimum skills to earn a family wage, the women then plunge into poverty.

C: Non-Supportive Families

The evidence of non-supportive families was not true for all of the women; some of them came from very warm and supportive families. This was true, however, for some of the other women. Consider the following examples.

Julie described to me her growing-up years. "My stepfather was an alcoholic, my mother was trying for martyrdom, and she still is. I was taught by my family that being a woman, you are dumb; you have no rights. When my uncle was sexually abusing me, he said that it was his right. I can remember always being told, 'You are dumb. You will never amount to a hill of beans. If you amount to anything, you will be a whore. You are not good.' Even now when I tell them that I am trying to go back to school, they say, 'You can't do that; you are out of your mind to try that.'"

Susan, describing her non-supportive family life, said, "My father ran out on us when my mother was six months pregnant with me, and my brother was two and-a-half. I've never seen him. My mother, however, is always telling me I'll never be nothing. 'You'll never do this and can never do that. You can't do this, and you can't do that,' is all she says. When I try to move out on my own, she says, 'Well, I don't have a daughter.' She can't be down on my back, dragging me down all the time. I have come too far to have someone drag me down. Even if it is my own mother."

Not having money or any extra money was a common factor for all the families. So, when these women were betrayed and then tried to make it on their own, their families simply didn't have that extra money to help them through the hard times.

Women of Commitment

These women can be viewed as women of commitment. The men may have left, but the women remain committed to rearing their children and taking care of the family. They must be both mother and provider. Think of these two roles as ends of a seesaw. No matter what position it is in, the woman has a difficult time. If the mothering end of the seesaw is tipped up, the minimal time spent in the provider role means abject poverty. If it is tipped so that the provider role is dominant, the strain on the mothering role produces problems and loss for the children. Trying to balance the mother and provider roles with minimum financial resources is a daily challenge, full of stresses and uncertainties.

The women's lives are like "stone soup," in that they are trying to make do with practically nothing. The average income of the women was $7,800 per year. There is no money for a pack of gum for the child or an inexpensive toy. If they buy the gum, then they can't buy the milk. That's the kind of trade-offs the women deal with every day.

Nonetheless, many had some optimistic stories. One

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woman told how she would take two sheets out, put them on the floor, and then put the food on the floor so they could have a picnic. Stone soup: trying to make do with nothing.

Coupled with that, the women were also having to deal with the scars of the abuse on the children. Recall the words of Ameha who said that her daughter wanted the window shut, even in the summer. Even though they leave these situations, they still have to deal with their difficult family scenarios based upon what the children have experienced.

In terms of their working situation, I call it "Hitting your head on the cellar ceiling." These women of course would love to get even close to the so-called glass ceiling, but it's very far away from them. There were basically three kinds of work that these women participated in. They did factory work, where indeed they did work hard for the money, or they were waitresses, where they experienced the flexibility for child-care, but obviously no future; or the last kind, the less typical jobs, were caregiving jobs, such as nurse's aides and other jobs dealing with ways of helping others. More than half of the women had worked in one or more factories. These women have helped produce cartons, cookies, light bulbs, dog bones, sneakers, and turkey parts. You name it, they've made it, primarily in assembly line operations.

Factory Work

Jean, the mother of five children, completed her GED after leaving her abusive husband and now works in a food processing plant. I'll read you a few of the things that she said about her job. "What I do is trim and pack the meat. I really don't mind the job. We do different things, anywhere from trimming to packing the meat, but it's the rules that really get to me. During the first sixty days, you are not allowed to miss two days. Well, I missed two days. My car broke down. A girl who started with me was five minutes late, and she got fired. But I tell ya, if I get a phone call and one of my kids is sick, you better believe I'm out of here. Let them fire me. That's ridiculous, because kids always get sick. Anyway, they changed my starting time to 6:00 a.m., and you have to stay until you're finished. You stay or you're terminated. My neighbor is going to take my three little kids at 5:30 in the morning so I can get to work by 6:00. That means we all get up at 4:30 a.m. She'll take them to daycare, and, if I'm not back, she'll pick them up. The twelve- and thirteen-year-old are on their own. The company didn't give my any choice. I'm trying to find another job."

And then there is LaVerne. She has never married, is a high-school graduate, and a mother of one. "I worked in a dog bone factory," said LaVerne. "They would bring in big sheets of raw hide. We would rinse them and then tie them up into little bows for the dogs. My boss was okay, but the job was minimum wage, and the rules were too strict. Anyhow, I was working at the dog bone factory, and my daughter had many problems with her ears. She had tubes in and out. Her tonsils and adenoids came out. She had gotten sick while I was working, and I missed work, and I kept missing work because of taking her to the doctors and getting her operations, and I got fired."

Waitressing Work

Waitressing provides flexibility when the children are young, but very often when the woman has teenage children, the very hours that she could earn the most money are also the very hours when she really needs to be home supervising her children.

Caregiving Jobs

These were the dream jobs. These were the jobs the women really wanted. Said Susan, "I've always wanted to be a nurse. I just really love what nurses do. I would like to be an LPN." She had just gotten her certification as a nurse's aide. "I'm proud of the fact that I'm doing something for these people who can't do something for themselves."

They have no advancement opportunities. They have no training opportunities. They have no opportunities to earn additional money. Also, these women are vulnerable and quite replaceable in the work force.

Vicki, who worked double-shift in a nursing home for five years, said, "I loved that job. The people, the older people, you grow close to them. It's like seeing your grandma and grandpa again. I miss that job. I was in housekeeping for one shift and a nurse's aide for the other shift."

The stories go on, but in summary of their work stories, we see, certainly, that these are jobs in the cellar—jobs going nowhere. They have no advancement opportunities. They have no training opportunities. They have no opportunities to earn additional money. Also, these women are vulnerable and quite replaceable in the work force. You heard some of the stories, including that of LaVerne in the dog bone factory. Her child got sick, and she was fired. Vicki loved working in the nursing home. When she got allergic to a chemical and couldn't get workmen's compensation, she had to leave her job and now she has to go back to factory work. In Jean's case, the plant was full of single mothers, but nonetheless, they changed the hours to 6:00 a.m., before the daycare center opened.

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The women need support as mothers. They need support as providers, and they need support for balancing their dual roles. - Virginia Schein

Women's Work: Women Working for Women's Wages

What we have here is women's work and women working for women's wages. No matter how hard they work at the factory, they at best earn $7.00 per hour, which amounts to about $14,500 per year. The waitressing jobs bring in around $15,600. In the caregiving jobs, the hourly wages range from $5.70 to $7.75 per hour, which amounts to around $11,800 to $16,000 annually. The poverty threshold for a mother and two children is about $11,600. Falling below that, the mother and her family are considered poor. With three children, the threshold is around $14,700. Sometimes the women earn enough to inch above the poverty line, but any problem, large or small, quickly depletes their meager resources. If the kids get sick, the car breaks down, or something happens with the landlord, they quickly slip back below the poverty line. Despite all of their hard work, they never seem to be able to get themselves out of poverty permanently.

Several of the women said they really wanted to go back to the schools and tell these young women, "Don't drop out. Get your skills. Don't be dependent on your mate; you never know what's going to happen." I think that the voices of these women carried back to the young women would be powerful.

Most of the occupations that the women had or were aware of were quite traditional. Many of them spoke of working in the same factories that their own mothers had worked in. Some were waitresses, and spoke of their mothers as waitresses. But despite all this, almost all of the women had an extremely positive attitude toward working, but they would often conclude, as LaVerne concluded to me, "I don't know why life should be so hard. Life seems like I get on a boat and get going, and then something happens and I fall back again. Then I have to start all over again. When I get back in the boat, I work hard, and then something happens and I have to start all over again. It seems like I never get anywhere, but I work real hard. The big question for me would be to figure out how to get somewhere, stay there, and keep going, but I don't know how to do that."

One Reason for this "Pathways Workshop"

One of the reasons that you are here is to come up with an array of ideas of how these women can do that. We need to find out how they can transform their lives from those of poverty and struggle into those with more income, more opportunities, and, most importantly, into lives with hope. My framework, which is a rather broad one, includes income opportunities, social support and linking systems, and help and healing. All three of these aspects are necessary in order for the women to be able to leave poverty permanently. As the "ABC's" of poverty reveal, no one factor propels women into poverty. Leaving poverty permanently requires them to deal with multiple needs of income opportunities, social support and linking systems, and access to help and healing.

Income Opportunities

I define income opportunities as those that provide the possibility of earning a family wage with good benefits, offer a chance of increased earnings over time, and have the possibility for growth in skills and advancement. And in today's political climate, it's important to state, "A job is not enough." We've seen the kind of jobs that the women have. We've seen that they are working, but they are in jobs that, at best, keep the wolf away from the door. The jobs that the women have are jobs leading nowhere. They offer no economic stability and no future for the women or their children. The alternative is to think far more broadly than just "a job" and consider an array of income opportunities. One size does not fit all; we need to consider a variety of approaches to enhancing the women's opportunities to earn a family wage.

Traditional Higher Education

One approach is to help more women pursue post-secondary education. There were several women in the group who had begun or completed some level of post-secondary education. Two of the women had been high school drop-outs. When their children were little, they had gone back to get their GED. Then they went on and now have an associate college degree. It was hard. The children were young, the car would break down, they had to juggle school, housework, and child care, but they did it. The kinds of good-paying jobs that these women now qualify for points to their leaving poverty permanently.

Non-Traditional Job Opportunities

Going back to school is not appropriate for everyone. Another avenue is non-traditional job opportunities. Many women still think traditionally. They pursue women's work and they receive women's wages. However, it's the non-traditional jobs where the money is that you can earn a decent wage to provide for your children, as a construction worker, machinist, pipe fitter, etc. A good example of this is the "Step Up" program, which is an 18-month program for low-income women in housing renovations. During the program, they earn $13.00 an hour. They go on to get training in areas such as carpentry, and

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now some of them are earning $19.00 per hour. They are far away from poverty, and far, far above the poverty threshold.

Interest-Based Training and Models for Micro-Enterprise Development

In discussing interest-based training, we need to consider how to take some of the interests of the women, such as in cooking and food preparation, and link them with opportunities for earning a family wage. Why not encourage training for participants to be chefs and nutritional consultants? Many of the women liked interacting with and caring for the elderly. These are good jobs, but why not go one step further and encourage careers in nursing home management?

Starting and running a small business could be a good income opportunity for many poor single mothers. Several programs, such as the Women's Economic Development Cooperation, have shown that poor women can do this successfully. Models for financing micro-enterprise development are not just for poor women in developing countries but can work for poor women in this country as well. The models work in other countries. The financing works; 99 percent of the women pay back their loans. Consideration of such models can spark new ideas for assisting poor women in the US.

Social Support and Linking Systems

The women need support as mothers. They need support as providers, and they need support for balancing their dual roles. The stress and fatigue resulting from juggling both work and family, and the isolated and marginalized nature of their lives suggests that we need to focus on social support if they are going to overcome the barriers of poverty.

One such example is Information Networks. I am continually struck by how isolated the women are. They need ways to encourage more information sharing. The women that were in support networks spoke glowingly about the help that they received, just being with other women like themselves, and working to encourage one another. Another example is Community Living and Resource Sharing. There are many examples of this kind of community living, such as the Women's Housing Coalition in Albuquerque and Warren Village in Denver. These provide models for living arrangements that support the multiple needs of the single mother. Why not develop community living arrangements which can provide affordable housing for single mothers as well as allow for the sharing of child care, chores, housekeeping, etc.? Why not put job readiness programs and other job training programs at the living site? When you have children, it is far easier to work where you are rather then taking the children on buses and in cars to go other places. It's a way of thinking in terms of housing that provides far more than just housing for women raising children alone in poverty.

A third example is what I call Learning Links. Learning Links help forge links between these women and the community at large. Most of these women, even those living in the middle of cities, are isolated from the mainstream of the community. The women told me stories of what they didn't get from their families. One example is that of knowledge about nutrition; a woman said, "I never learned anything about nutrition. I know nothing about fashion." A mentor in the community could work with her, and fill in those learning gaps. Work and school mentors would also be helpful. Many people are anxious about going back to school as adults, and it's probably even more frightening for the impoverished woman with young children. Why not link her up with women in the community who have already done this and are successful?

We could create Advising Roles that give the women an opportunity to advise the younger women in their communities. Several of the women said they really wanted to go back to the schools and tell these young women, "Don't drop out. Get your skills. Don't be dependent on your mate; you never know what's going to happen." I think that the voices of these women carried back to the young women would be powerful.

Work-Family Partnerships

Finally, with regard to social support systems, we need to focus more on developing work-family partnerships. Employers, unions, child care providers, and the community all need to share and become part of the partnership. The burden should not be just on the woman, as it usually is today. When the kids are sick, it's her job to fix things. Why not encourage parent-friendly work environments, making it a partnership so that everyone takes some of the responsibility? All women, but these women in particular, need flexibility. They do not need to get fired for tending to a sick child.

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I've been to sorrow's kitchen, and I've licked the pots clean. - Elsey Dorsey, long-time civil rights activist in Mississippi on her experience with rural poverty

Working Together For A Change: Social Capital As A Pathway From Poverty

-- by Dr. John Gaventa

Dr. John Gaventa is a professor of sociology and co-director of the Community Partnership Center at the University of Tennessee. Dr. Gaventa has written widely on rural development issues, including the award-winning book Power and Powerlessness in an Appalachian Valley, and Communities in Economic Crisis, (co-edited with Barbara Smith and Alex Willingham). Currently, Dr. Gaventa is conducting a research and evaluation project on the rural Empowerment Zone program.

Introduction:

I am pleased to be here for a number of reasons. For many years, my own work has been centered around issues of poverty and rural development in Appalachia, mainly in the Southern and Central regions. I am glad therefore to be here with people from further up the mountain chain, and from other parts of the Northeast. I'm glad to see folks from West Virginia, a state that has been hard hit by the economic decline of the coal industry and other industries, but also a state with rich traditions of work to overcome poverty. The Appalachian region also stretches northward, to Pennsylvania and New York, and I know that the issues of rural poverty that we face are shared in many ways by those of you from other states in New England as well.

Recently, for instance, I had the opportunity to spend a few days off the coast of Maine, on Vinalhaven Island, which has a history of granite mining. I was struck by the similarity of the mining towns to those in the coal regions of Central Appalachia. We share many other patterns related to rural poverty, such as our timber economies, our history with textiles and other manufacturing plants, and our land resources and histories of absentee land ownership patterns.

I also am pleased to be here because I was a participant and speaker at the Pathways from Poverty Conference in Memphis in late 1993, where, like you are doing here, people from across the Southern region came to discuss issues and to develop strategies for action.

Today I would like to share some of the discussions we had in Memphis with you. I also would like to explore different broad strategies for dealing with rural development, and to suggest that the solutions to rural poverty come from investing in our social capital, our networks of participation and trust, for *working together for a change*. The title of this talk intentionally has a double meaning—working together, in many cases, would represent change, and by working together, we can bring about change.

I also want to share with you some examples of the possibilities and tensions of working together for rural development drawn from the Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community program, based on a current research project which I am conducting connected with that initiative.

The Hidden Faces of Rural Poverty

In Memphis, we heard a powerful litany of interrelated problems of rural poverty, as I am sure you will also hear at this meeting. We heard data which showed the worsening of trends in many parts of our region - even worse because they are hidden from the national agenda. In a moving opening address, Elsey Dorsey, a long-time civil rights activist in Mississippi, summarized her experience with rural poverty with the saying, "I've been to sorrow's kitchen, and I've licked the pots clean."

We heard of unemployment and underemployment, illiteracy and missed educational opportunity, violence within families and in communities, homelessness in the midst of empty land and buildings, racism and alienation, and of many more problems in rural poverty.

The problems we discussed in the South are shared by other regions, including yours here as well. For instance, we are aware that in the last decades the gap between the "haves" and "have-nots" has grown in this country. The gap between rural and urban areas also has grown. Many of the counties which have declined the most may be found in the region represented here today, as we have heard from other speakers. Across the country, poverty is on the rise, and the rural poor are often the most affected, yet the most invisible.

As we discuss rural poverty, we need to discuss the issues in more than narrow statistical terms.

We should talk of the quiet and often silent tragedy as plants, mines, and factories around rural America close, seeking cheaper wages elsewhere, and of the particular impact of the North

American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the internationalization of the economy on rural communities.

We should discuss the trend that as communities grow poorer and more desperate, they are increasingly being targeted for the most dangerous industries, such as garbage dumps and toxic waste dumps, especially in our communities of color. This is an issue that I know has faced mountain communities of West Virginia as well as rural communities of upstate New York. We should talk of the false choice that communities are forced to make between getting funds for schools and jobs now while risking destruction of the land, water, and air for our future generations.

We should talk of how the growing disparity between the rich and the poor also translates into a power disparity between those who have the capacity and resources to affect the future the way they wish to see it, and those who are the most affected by the problems, yet whose voices are lost in the political process.

We should talk of the fact that, though the problems of rural poverty are of enormous significance, they are not often recognized in the national debates and media, and of how the cuts in federal budgets that are being enacted and proposed are likely to make these problems even more serious in the future.

But in Memphis, as well as here, we chose not to dwell too deeply on the problems, but to turn our energy to building our collective strategies and vision. We were challenged early by Gene Summers to "have a dream together, to work together to devise ways to break the vicious cycles of poverty." As you will do over the next few days, teams of citizens, officials, researchers and others worked to create that cure with a wealth of ideas and proposals.

When we hear the data and hear the voices of our communities, we must remember that we are dealing with an economic disaster of national proportions and significance. It requires us to speak out loudly and strongly for new and creative remedies. What are some of those approaches?

Towards New Strategies

From the proposals that came forward in Memphis, one thing was clear: the solutions to rural poverty do not mean that we can continue business as usual. If we are honest, we can say that many of the strategies that our institutions have tried in the past have not worked. Many of us work in 1890's land-grant institutions that have had a mandate for a century to help to solve these problems. Over twenty-five years ago, in my part of the region, the Appalachian Regional Commission was established, which has spent millions building industrial parks and highways attempting to lure industry into the region. Again, many changes were made, especially in the areas of education and health care, but many of the industries which came in the 1960s and 1970s have now moved on, leaving a region just as poor relative to the rest of the nation as when the "War on Poverty" was begun.

So — new solutions are needed. It is not business as usual.

What might a new approach involve? Increasingly, practitioners and scholars are recognizing that rural poverty must be understood not only in economic terms but in human, environmental, and social terms as well. For instance, Cornelia and Jan Flora have argued,

> Community sustainability is based in part on the resiliency of that community to respond to changes in the larger environment...Resilience depends in part on the resources available to the community. Those resources can be viewed as forms of capital, which are to be reinvested locally to produce new wealth. Capital can be thought of as any resource capable of producing new resources. Two forms of capital have conventionally been viewed as important for community development: financial and manufactured capital, and human capital. When looking at community sustainability, it is also important to analyze environmental capital and social capital.[1]

I would like to discuss each of these forms of capital as they affect our strategies for development, paying special attention to this newer ideal of social capital.

Economic and Financial Capital

The Traditional Approach

Historically, the traditional approach to rural development argued that what was needed was the investment of capital in business and infrastructure. Through financial investment, jobs and community development would follow. In practice, for many rural areas, this approach translated to a "business climate" approach to development that did whatever necessary to lure industry into the region.

Based upon a trickle-down understanding of economics, the assumption was that what was good for business was good for workers and communities. In the name of maintaining the business climate, workers received low wages, communities provided tax and other concessions to industry, and independent unions or grassroots organizations who could really play a role in building communities were discouraged.

As we now know, while the business climate approach was successful in luring many industries into rural communities, the benefits seldom trickled down to the rural poor. As one woman

I'm still waiting to get wet. - woman from Tennessee on the 'trickle down' benefits of luring industry into rural communities

from a poor community in Tennessee told me. "I'm still waiting to get wet."

Industrial Trends

Even where there were successes, they are often waning, as industries move on to other, less developed parts of the world in search of a better climate. In the Northeast, especially in the 1960s and early 1970s, industries from your rural areas left the region, coming south as our states competed against yours to offer better incentives. Then in the 1980s, many of these same industries began moving on to other yet cheaper places of operation, such as the maquiladora zone in Mexico. As Southern economic historian Jim Cobb has written, "Industries fleeing the South are purchasing one-way tickets to Taiwan and other exotic destinations just as readily as they used to depart Akron, Ohio, for Opelika, Alabama."

New Approaches

Development must be something more than competing with one another for scarce industries. And even where business investment does occur, it may not be connected to creation of many jobs, due to automation, or the jobs may be too high-skill for the rural poor, or too low-paying to help get them out of poverty. If we can no longer rely upon the strategy of luring the solution in from the outside, what can we do?

Countless reports have begun to suggest the solution that "We must develop from within." We must invest in community development, not just in economic development. We must invest in rural people, and grow and develop community leaders and community organizations who can make a difference. We must invest in a healthy "community climate" - and that in turn will affect business. What, in practice, does this new approach mean?

First, we must recognize that there is an interconnection between rebuilding community and providing jobs. We must deliver the services that we need, build the infrastructure that we need, hire the teachers that we need, support the community leaders that we need, and create jobs and income for rural people who need them. If we continue to cut human and community services, as current budget policy wants to do, we also cut the jobs that can help solve many of our local problems.

Human Capital

Investing in Individuals

To invest in people is also to invest in human capital - that is, to develop *individual* skills through education, literacy, job training, etc. (In reviewing the conference packet which describes the work of the groups here, we can see that many of you are doing very creative work in this area. You are training young people in job skills, in literacy, in computer skills, etc.) While these strategies are important and are absolutely essential in today's economy, as I am sure you find day-to-day, they may not by themselves go far enough.

As we are all too aware, we can train and educate people to fit into jobs, but those jobs may not exist in our rural communities. Even if the jobs do exist, education, particularly at the pre-college level, does not necessarily mean upward mobility. It may only mean entry to low-wage jobs, which may themselves predominate in rural areas.

In Memphis, a constant theme was that it is not enough to train people to fit into existing jobs. We must support the capacity of communities to create their own jobs and their own futures. As one speaker said, "We can teach people to fish for themselves, but it does no good if they are fishing in an empty pond. We need to teach them also to stock the pond for themselves."

At one level, such capacity building involves the creation of home-grown entrepreneurship and business, but it cannot stop there. As a number of people have said, "Economic development is not a single issue process." It means creating the capacity of people to act for themselves in every facet of their community life. It means strengthening the ability of poor communities to create grassroots organizations and to participate for themselves in solving the problems they face. It means moving from building the human capital of individuals to the creation of social capital - that is, the capacity of people to work together collectively.

Investing in Social Capital

Increasingly, social scientists in this country and around the world are writing about and discussing this idea of Social Capital, as well as Economic and Human Capital. Social Capital: the creation of organizations, networks, and values that are part of what is called the civil society. Robert Putnam, the Harvard professor who is a key author of the concept of social capital, refers to it as "features of social organization, such as networks, norms, and trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit."

Communities with large amounts of horizontal social capital "value solidarity, civic participation, and integrity." On the other hand, communities with vertical social capital tend to be more ones of dependency, patron-client relationships, and corruption. Horizontal social capital can strengthen participatory democracy. Vertical social capital works against it. Civic participation - the building of community organizations and associations, not just individual leadership and skills - must be seen as the critical ingredient for fundamental change.

Putnam develops this idea in a book on democracy and development in Italy. He found that in almost every case, the development of a strong civil society preceded the development of the economy and healthy governance. I quote:

These communities did not become civil simply because they were rich. The historical record suggests precisely the opposite: they have become rich because they were civil. The social capital embodied in the norms and networks of civil engagement seems to be a precondition for economic development, as well as for effective government.

Development economists take note: civics matters.

And continuing:

...scores of studies of rural development have shown that a vigorous network of indigenous grassroots associations can be as essential to growth as physical investment, appropriate technology, or that nostrum of neoclassical economists, getting the prices right.

...investments in jobs and education, for example, will be more effective if they are coupled with reinvigoration of community associations.[2]

More recently, Putnam has begun applying this concept to the United States. In an article entitled "Bowling Alone," he writes about the decline in civic participation in America, pointing out that people appear to be participating in local associations and trusting one another less than in previous decades. In fact, he points out, while more people bowl than ever, they are more likely to bowl alone, not in local clubs. The decline of civil participation, he argues, has enormous consequences for our democracy.[3]

What does this argument about the decline in social capital and in participation in community-based association mean for rural communities?

Here, I want say there are two trends, which may at first sound contradictory.

First, the history of many rural communities has not allowed the opportunity for the development of strong civil society or community associations at the grassroots level, especially as they relate to the economy. The industrial development model relied on local elites to attract industry and capital and to create development. Development was done to and for local communities, not by those communities themselves.

In many of our rural communities, especially in coal towns, textile towns, timber towns, and furniture towns, citizens were brought up in a company town tradition which promoted patterns of paternalism, patronage and dependency, in which skills and traditions of civic engagement did not flourish. In many communities characterized by such power, patterns of intimidation persist. Recently, for instance, in a rural community in which I work, a member of Save Our Cumberland Mountains was beaten up for speaking out at a public meeting about a landfill to be placed in his rural community. That's not good for social capital.

What is social capital? Robert Putnam, the Harvard professor who is a key author of the concept of social capital, refers to it as *"features of social organization, such as networks, norms, and trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit."*

On the other hand, rural communities have maintained a tradition of doing things together, through local churches, family gatherings, rural clubs, town meetings, and community organizations. Rural people often have preserved values of helping one another out in adversity, and have a depth of experience of collective trust that can now be harnessed to make a difference in rural development.

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Whether we begin building human capital, social capital, or economic capital, all of our approaches must be intertwined. These are not separate pathways, but related pathways. – John Gaventa

As the vacuum is created by the failure of the trickle-down business climate approach, these communities are increasingly participating in new ways on matters of the economy. Dozens of new local associations are springing up. There is a new revolution at the local level as groups try to respond to plant closings, fix the infrastructure, train young people, conduct literacy classes, create jobs, and do all sorts of things for themselves that traditionally we have depended upon others to do.

Our rural development strategy must invest, then, in strengthening the building of social capital, or community organization and association, not just economic and human capital. We must harness the energy of community associations and organizations towards development. How is this to be done?

First, it means new strategies of working together. Traditionally, matters of economic development and matters of community development have been separated. Now they must be linked. Community groups and associations who traditionally have not been at the economic development table must be there, and those at the table must make room for them.

Collaboration doesn't mean that different groups cease to argue, or that conflict goes away. It does mean that all groups must be at the table not only in the planning and visioning process, but all the way through to implementing and deciding how resources are to be used.

The Case of the Rural Empowerment Zone Program

An example of the possibilities and difficulties of working together can be found in the recent case of the Empowerment Zone program, one of the major experiments of dealing with distressed poverty communities of this administration. President Clinton signed the bill into law on August 10, 1993, authorizing $2.5 billion in tax incentives and $1 billion in Title XX block grants to revitalize distressed urban and rural communities.

The program articulates four key principles for revitalization:

- It attempts to create economic opportunity specially targeted to the residents of the poorest communities in the country;
- It insists that development must be sustainable and comprehensive, rather than a piecemeal or quick fix solution;
- It says that all parties in the local community should collaborate and participate in the development process, especially those most directly affected; and
- It suggests that strategies should be built upon the strategic vision of the local community, and requires communities to come together to develop their plan.

The opportunity to participate brought hundreds of communities across the country together in a process of visioning for their own future. Given the chance to participate, people did so, often crossing traditional boundaries that had kept them apart. In the central West Virginia strategic planning process, for instance, hundreds of citizens, community groups and others participated together across a large, multi-county region.

If the strategic visioning process brought groups together to the same table, the implementation process has shown how difficult it is to keep them there, and how much further we have to go to build the ways and means of working together. A number of issues have been raised about working across different sectors, intergovernmental cooperation, building and maintaining community participation, etc.

Lessons Learned

So one of the lessons that we are seeing from the first year of the EZ/EC program is that collaboration and partnership, even when it is named as part of a policy, is not always easy. Collaboration doesn't mean that different groups cease to argue, or that conflict goes away. It does mean that all groups must be at the table not only in the planning and visioning process, but all the way through to implementing and deciding how resources are to be used.

And here too we have found the importance of social capital. As delays, tensions, and difficulties have been experienced in the first year, in those communities where strong community organizations were already in place before the program was started, participation has remained relatively strong. However, where community groups were weak or non-existent, or where community participation simply meant having a few public hearings, it has been hard for real participation to continue or to grow, without the building of strong community-based associations.

This points to an important lesson for community development. If we are to collaborate across sectors, we must take the time and spend the resources to build the organizational capacity of low-income communities themselves to participate in the process of change. Building social capital is necessary pre-work to doing other types of development.

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Another important lesson that we can learn from the Empowerment Zone process has to do with how we define success. As more people are brought into the development process, and as more collaboration occurs, we may find that people define success differently. In the Kentucky Empowerment Zone, officials thought they had success because they could use subsidies to attract 600 jobs. But to others in the community, these jobs in a chicken factory were low paying, risked pollution of the environment, and didn't relate to the community plan. They wanted a different kind of development. In other communities, what is most important are the intangibles—programs which build capacity, pride and self-esteem. But to many groups used to more traditional development, such programs could not be counted and tracked over time. Disagreements developed over how the results could be measured, and if they couldn't be measured, as to whether they could be funded.

The lesson here is that if we believe that the development of social capital is an important part of development, how we define success and who gets to measure success also will change. Success in development may include dignity, diversity, and democracy, as well as roads, jobs and sewers.

Finally, whether we begin with building human capital, social capital, or economic capital, all of our approaches must be intertwined. These are not separate pathways, but related pathways. This conference—as the one in Memphis—has worked towards bringing people from different sectors and pathways to the same table to talk about how we move forward together.

But again, to collaborate does not mean business as usual. We must learn new ways of working together as academic, government, business, and grassroots sectors.

- The academic sector must learn to produce research that is usable, research that doesn't just treat the poor as depersonalized statistics, but helps them act for themselves;

- The private sector must learn to recognize the commitment not only to creating industry in community, but also to developing the community as well, and to being responsible to it;

- The public sector, including many people who have been operating critical programs for many years, must learn to be more inclusive, to involve these new grassroots associations and community organizations as partners, not simply recipients in the development process; and

- The grassroots sector must learn not to stereotype the other sectors where we have been excluded in the past, and to teach ourselves how to build broader links, because the local group, no matter how important, will not bring change alone.

Collaboration does not mean the absence of disagreement and conflict, but it does mean that we in our different sectors will work together toward common goals.

So—as you go to your groups, don't proceed with business as usual. Let's talk about ways to give rural poverty in America the attention it deserves; let's work together to create community development that is also democratic and participatory, that grows from dignity and respect of the people, that is sustainable for the next generation, that changes policies as well as people, and that is collaborative among our pathways and sectors.

Good luck in working together for a change.

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Endnotes

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3. Robert D. Putnam, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital, "Journal of Democracy, Vol. 6, 1, pp. 65-78.

In the Northeast, only about seven million people live in nonmetropolitan counties that account for 60 percent of the region's land area.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF RURAL POVERTY

-- by Dr. Leif Jensen

Dr. Leif Jensen is an associate professor of rural sociology at Penn State. He is also senior research associate of the Population Research Institute at Penn State. Dr. Jensen has worked extensively in the analysis of poverty and welfare utilization among immigrants to the United States. His current research interests include poverty dynamics of the rural and urban elderly, economic survival strategies of poor families, and trends and dynamics in underemployment in rural and urban areas. Dr. Jensen is also working on a comparative study of children's labor force participation and schooling in Chile, Peru, and Mexico.

Special thanks to Mark Nord of the Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture for preparing all Maps, and to the Population, Labor, and Income Branch of the Economic Research Service for preparing all Figures.

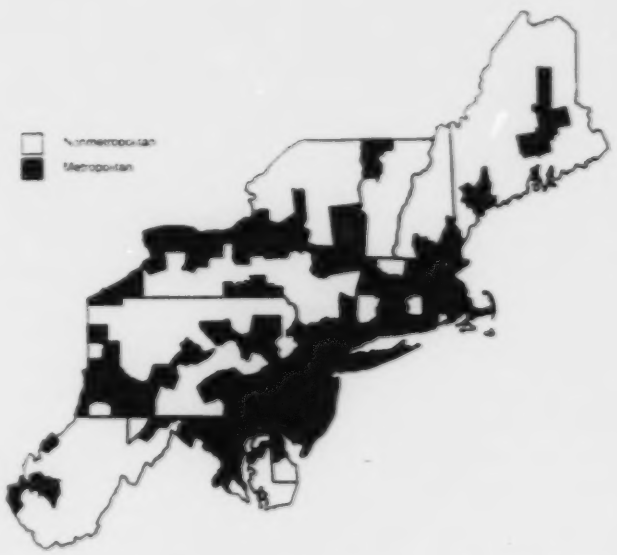
Introduction

The purpose of my talk is to provide you with some background information on the demographics of rural poverty in the Northeast. I'd like you to keep in mind that it's the very vivid stories of the sort that Virginia Schein tells us about—the individual stories of the poor, and thousands more like them—that conspire to produce these statistics that I'm going to be sharing with you. As far as what I'm going to be covering, I'm going to start with some important definitions, then move on to some statistics on the level and trend in poverty. I'll then talk about the geographic distribution of poverty in the nonmetropolitan or rural Northeast, and describe rural poor in this region. Finally, I'll discuss the question of "Will workfare work?"

A good place to begin a presentation on the demographics of rural poverty in the Northeast is to briefly define the words **rural** and **poverty**, and to clarify what I mean by each for the purposes of this talk. Let's start with the definition of **rural**. There are various ways in which **rural** can be defined; one is by population size, or how many people live in a particular place. Rural places are those with small population size. Another is by population density, or how many people there are per square mile. A rural area would have low population density. Using proximity to cities as a criterion, the term **rural** could be used if you live a long distance from a large urban place. We also could define rural economies by using occupation and industry. Being rural is living in a place that's dominated by farming or agriculture, for example. Sometimes the prevalence of traditional and conservative lifestyles or values is invoked to define what rural is. The definition of **rural** that I'm going to be using here is a place that is not metropolitan. A metropolitan area can be conceptualized as a large city with satellite cities and surrounding suburbs. More technically, a metropolitan area consists of a central county that has at least one city of 50,000 residents or, barring that, a total urbanized area of 100,000, plus any surrounding counties that are tied socially and economically to that central county. All other counties, by default, are nonmetropolitan.

The Nonmetropolitan Northeast

Where is the nonmetropolitan northeast? Map 1 is a county map that shows nonmetropolitan counties in the Northeast. The definition of Northeast that we're using is slightly different from the US Census Bureau definition in that we're including West Virginia, Delaware, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. These are normally defined as Southern by the Census Bureau. If you look closely, you see a band of nonmetropolitan counties that are shaded lightly and run from the Southwest to the



Map 1: Nonmetropolitan counties in the Northeast, 1993. Data Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census Summary Tape File 3C, 1990.

Northeast. Only about seven million people live in these nonmetropolitan counties, but these nonmetropolitan counties account for 60 percent of the region's land area. You'll note that all of New Jersey and almost all of Rhode Island and Massachusetts are metropolitan. But as I'll come to later, this does not mean that there are no rural people living in these states.

Poverty Defined

What is poverty? Poverty also can be conceptualized in different ways. We can think of an absolute definition of poverty, that is, poverty as not having sufficient income to purchase basic needs. A relative definition might describe poverty as having an income that's much below average. A subjective definition of poverty might be that poverty simply exists when people feel they are poor, or conversely does not exist if people do not feel that they are poor. For the purposes of this presentation, I will be using the official definition of poverty. According to this definition, poverty is said to exist when an annual family income or annual personal income for people living alone or with unrelated individuals is less that that needed to purchase basic needs for food and clothing and necessities. The poverty thresholds in the US are set at three times the USDA's economy food plan. What some of you might not know is that the economy food plan is meant for short periods only. It is nutritionally inadequate in the long run. Nonetheless, that's what we base our poverty thresholds on. They are adjusted for family size, whether there are children present, and whether the head is elderly; there are also yearly adjustments to correct inflation. In 1995, the threshold for a family of four, with two adults and two children was $15,500. As Virginia Schein alluded to also, I think most of us can agree that it is very difficult to live on that kind of income.

The official definition of poverty has been the subject of a great deal of criticism. Some people think the thresholds are too high; some think they are too low. There are other problems with it. For example, there are rural and urban differences in the cost of living, and these are not accounted for. Also, the definition does not account for the fact that some people own their own homes outright, while other people are paying rent. Nonetheless, the official definition is useful for being able to track trends over time in the prevalence of poverty and to compare groups. It also is frequently used as a basis to determine income-eligibility for means-tested programs.

In a sense, this kind of sterile bureaucratic definition is unnecessary. Most people have an idea of what poverty is. They know poverty when they see or live it. An image that's often conjured up is that of inner city poverty. People think of ghettos and high-rise tenements, of homelessness and massive unemployment, of street crime, and a whole raft of problems associated with the so-called urban underclass. In a number of ways the perception that poverty is largely an urban problem is understandable. Urban poverty occurs close to media centers, and it is often geographically concentrated in neighborhoods making it visually more obvious, and politically more threatening, than poverty in less densely settled and more heterogeneous areas. Despite that conventional wisdom, I think statistics like these perhaps come as a surprise. Figure 1 is a graph showing our poverty rates in the US from 1959 to 1993, broken down as to whether people are living in nonmetropolitan versus metropolitan areas. You can see that no matter what year we're talking about, people in nonmetropolitan areas, or rural areas, are more likely to be poor. Another thing you can see here is the well-known rapid decline in poverty rates up to about 1969, and then the stagnation thereafter. Also, in the last few years, poverty rates have been on the rise.

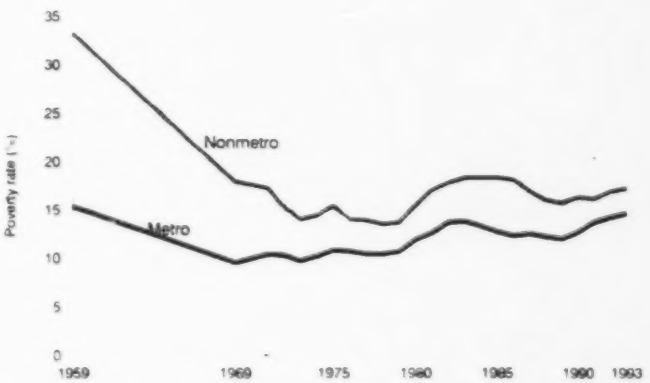


Figure 1: Poverty rate by residence, U.S. 1959-1993. Data Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census P-60 series 1974-1994.

In Relation to the Northeast

Is this also typical of the Northeast? Let's find out. Figure 2 is a graph showing poverty rates by region. What you can see here is that no matter what region we're talking about, folks in nonmetropolitan areas have higher poverty rates that their counterparts in metro counties. One thing you can see here is the well-known disadvantages in the nonmetropolitan South, but regardless of where we're talking about, Northeast areas included, folks living in rural areas are more likely to be poor.

While the poverty rates are somewhat lower in the Northeast

In nonmetropolitan counties of the Northeast, 92 percent of the people in poverty are white and non-Hispanic, 5.6 percent are black, and 2.1 percent are in other categories.

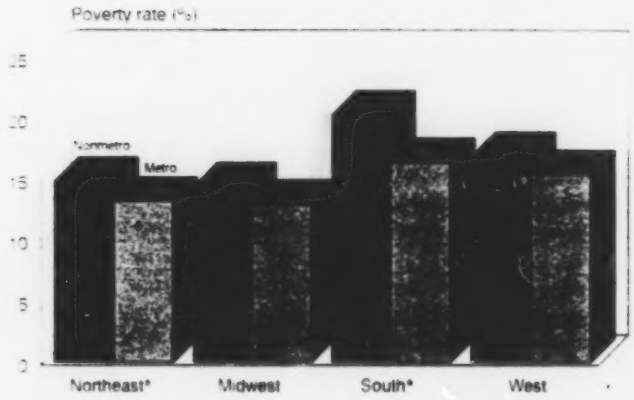


Figure 2: Poverty rate by region and residence, 1993. Data Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census Current Population Survey, March 1994. (DE, MD, DC, & WV included in Northeast)

than in other regions, one disadvantage that we have is that in the last three years poverty rates have risen faster here than elsewhere. Figure 4 shows the poverty rates in 1989 and 1993. These are nonmetropolitan poverty rates, and you should observe that the increase in rural poverty was greatest in the Northeast than in any of the other regions. Whatever has been going on in the economy, the Northeast has been hit harder than other regions.

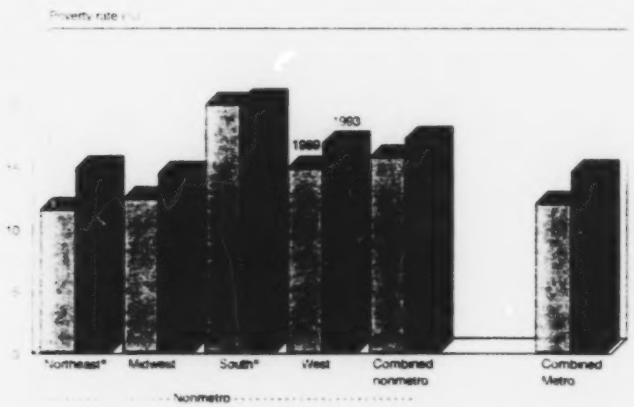


Figure 4: Poverty rate by residence and region, 1989-1993. Data Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census Current Population Surveys, 1990 & 1994. (DE, MD, DC, & WV included in Northeast)

Prevalence of Poverty in the Northeast

How about differences across our region in terms of the severity and prevalence of poverty? Figure 10 shows that folks in West Virginia are distinct in that they have nonmetropolitan poverty rates that are far higher than the rest of the region. Those states following West Virginia would be Pennsylvania, New York, Maine, and Maryland. But West Virginia really stands out here.

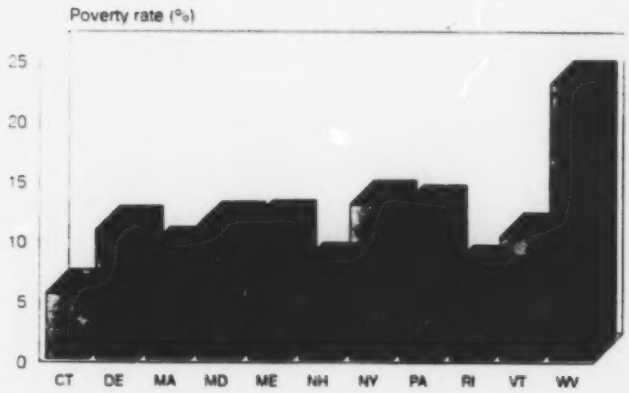


Figure 10: Nonmetro poverty rates by state, NE Region, 1993. Data Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census Summary Tape File 3C, 1990.

Let's see that in a map. Map 3 shows poverty rates. If you try to look past the checkered shaded counties which are metropolitan, you can see pockets of moderate to severe nonmetropolitan poverty in an arc that goes from Maine to West Virginia. Clearly West Virginia stands out here as having a severe problem of poverty in its nonmetropolitan counties.

The next map, Map 4, shows the black counties which are those nonmetropolitan counties in which over eight percent of the population is in "deep" or "severe" poverty; that is, their annual income is less than one-half the poverty line. Again, this means a family of four bringing in less than $7,774 per year. Again, West Virginia stands out on this map.

To this point, our focus has been on nonmetropolitan counties. While the distinction between metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas is a useful one, we all know that people living within metropolitan areas can still be living in quite rural

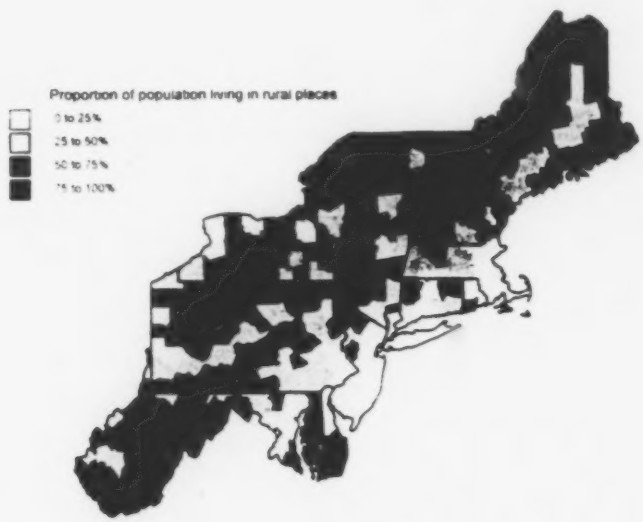
Map 3: Poverty rates in nonmetro Northeast counties, 1989. Data Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census Summary Tape File 3C, 1990.

Map 4: Rates of severe poverty (<half the poverty-income level) in nonmetro Northeast counties, 1989. Data Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census Summary Tape File 3C, 1990.

settings. Likewise, just because you live in a county that has no city over 50,000, and thus is nonmetropolitan, you could still be living in the downtown of a city of 30,000. The Census Bureau therefore also draws a distinction between rural and urban places. Basically a rural place is a minor civil division like a township or borough that has less than 2,500 residents. Counties differ quite a bit in terms of the percent of its residents who reside in rural places. So were is the rural Northeast?

The Rural Northeast

To this point, my concern has been between nonmetropolitan and metropolitan areas. While this distinction is useful, we all know that people living in metropolitan areas can still be living in rather rural settings. Likewise, even though you happen to be living in a county that doesn't have a city of 50,000 or more, you can still be living in a downtown of a city of the size of 30,000, for example. So the Census Bureau makes a useful distinction between rural and urban. **Rural are those people who are living in townships and boroughs, or minor civil divisions, with 2,500 or fewer residents.** Map 2 shows the percent of a county's population that is rural. The darker counties are those that have a high portion rural. Even though New Jersey is entirely metropolitan, it still has several counties that have a lot of rural people in them. Here, except for Washington DC, every state in the region has at least one county in which at least half the county population is rural. Again, the darker shaded counties have the highest percentage rural, and the same band of rurality can be seen going from Maine and arcing down into West Virginia.



Map 2: Rural population in Northeast counties, 1990. Data Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census Summary Tape File 3C, 1990.

One of the reasons why I covered the different conceptions of rural, nonmetropolitan, and poverty is both to let you know what's going on, but also to show you that during the next two

Up to 57.8 people could be competing for each available job if a policy such as Workfare forced all welfare recipients to work or face a loss or reduction in benefits. - from a statistical study by Jensen and Chitose

days, you needn't be bound by any one definition of **rural** or **poverty**. As I mentioned earlier, for all its faults, the advantages of the official definition of poverty is that it makes comparison easy. What I want to do for the next few minutes is give you a demographic profile of the rural and nonmetropolitan poor in the Northeast.

The Rural and Nonmetropolitan Poor in the Northeast

One way that Americans differ from one another is by race and ethnicity. Figure 5 shows the racial composition of poor people who live in nonmetropolitan counties of the Northeast. As the figure indicates, these people are overwhelmingly white and non-Hispanic: about 92 percent are in this category. Only 5.6 percent are black and 2.1 percent are in other categories. While they are not shown here, the corresponding figures for the **metropolitan** poor population are much different. There, 46.2 percent of the poor are non-Hispanic white, 28.5 percent are black, and 25.4 percent are in other categories. Thus, in the rural Northeast, poverty is largely a "white" problem.

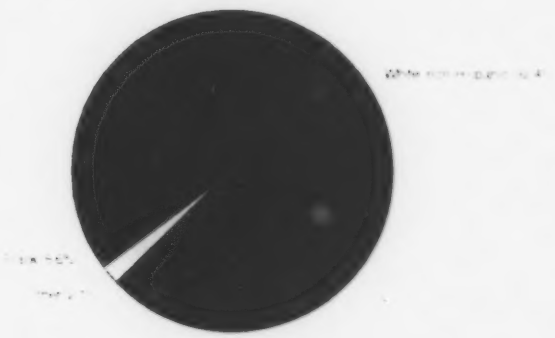


Figure 5: Composition of the Northeast Region nonmetro poor population by race and ethnicity, 1993. Data Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census Current Population Survey, March 1994.

In terms of family type, what is the composition of poor? We hear a lot about single-parent families, but is that a very common family type in the rural Northeast? What you can see in Figure 7 is that the most common family type among the poor population in the rural northeast is the husband-wife family. The second most common category, at 36 percent, is that of female-

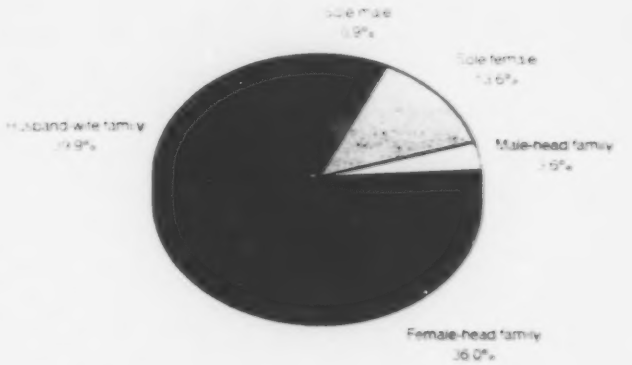


Figure 7: Composition of the Northeast Region nonmetro poor population by family type, 1993. Data Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census Current Population Survey, March 1994.

headed families. Should we be concerned about this 36% of female-headed families? After listening to the facts from Virginia Schein, we obviously should be concerned, and with good reason. Figure 8 shows the incidence of poverty within categories of family type. You can see that the poverty rate for female-headed families is over 40 percent, or four times that of people in families headed by a married couple.

Figure 8: Poverty rates by family type in Northeast Region nonmetro counties, 1993. Data Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census Current Population Survey.

Poverty and Employment

It's been said that the best cure for poverty is a large supply of jobs. The implication there is that there is a strong correlation between labor-market hardship and poverty. Figure 9 provides strong indication that this is certainly true in the nonmetropolitan Northeast. Only 13 percent of the poverty population is composed of people who live in families that have at least one full-time, full-year worker. Most of the rest of these folks are in families enduring some sort of employment hardship, whether they don't have anyone of working age, or they only have part-time workers, or their working age members are simply not employed. The strong link between employment hardship and poverty can also be seen in Map 5. It shows unemployment rates in counties. Map 8 indicates how underemployment is distributed by showing the proportion of working-age males, ages 15-64, who work less than full-time, full-year. In both maps you see the same arc of rural hardship that crosses our region.

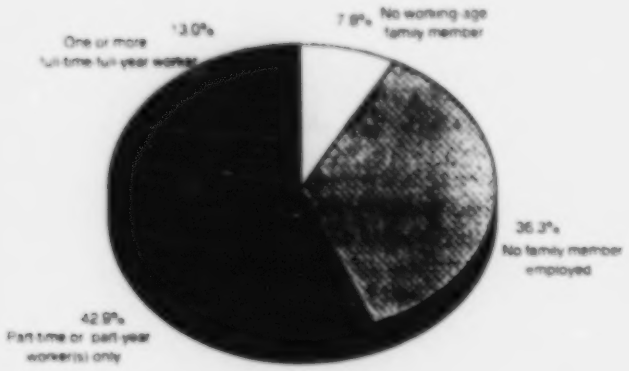
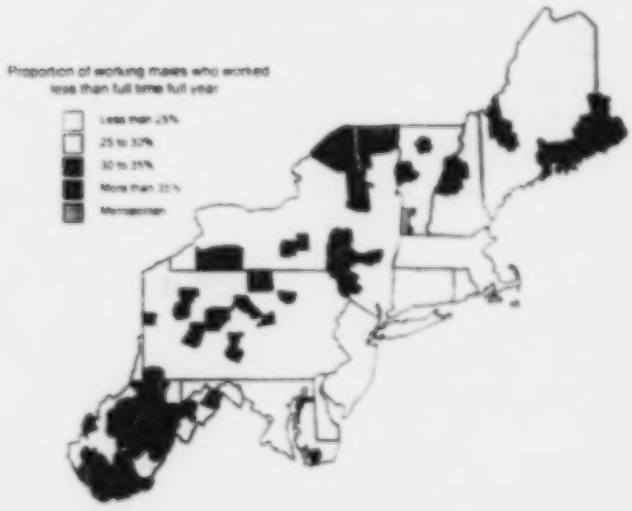


Figure 9: Composition of the Northeast Region nonmetro poor population by employment status of family members, 1993. Data Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census Current Population Survey, March 1994.

Map 5: Unemployment rates in nonmetro Northeast counties, 1989. Data Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census Summary Tape File 3C, 1990.



Map 8: Underemployment in nonmetro Northeast counties, 1989. Data Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census Summary Tape File 3C, 1990.

Welfare and Welfare Reform

There is recent evidence that poor rural families have come to rely more and more on public assistance. There's the assumption among some that rising welfare dependence has resulted from an erosion of the work ethic, or that maybe it's somehow contributed to the erosion of the work ethic. These worries have given rise to new calls for some sort of workfare, that is, that people should be expected to work or face a loss or reduction of their welfare benefits. Workfare provisions feature prominently in both the House and the recently passed Senate versions of

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It strikes me that recent legislation to reform the nation's basic anti-poverty programs is more about reducing welfare dependency and cutting costs than about reducing poverty. - Leif Jensen

welfare reform. It seems to me that the neglected question in all of this is whether there will be jobs out there for folks under the assumption that they should be made to work.

An Experiment

To answer that question I conducted an analysis—a modest statistical exercise—with a student of mine. This research was presented at a recent conference in Washington concerning the implications of welfare reform for rural America. First, we tried to determine what jobs would be accessible to welfare recipients. We estimated that 9.5 percent of jobs in the labor force would be accessible to welfare participants.

Clearly, not very many of those jobs are going to be vacant at any one time. What we did next was estimate the number of these jobs that would be vacant, relying on the work of labor economists. We estimated a vacancy rate of 1.03%, which translates into 114,000 jobs that would be available or vacant at any one time.

Now, who will be competing for those jobs? We drew on the legislation to come up with an estimate of the number of welfare recipients who would be expected to work. That turns out to be 1.9 million; or if we expect single folks with minor children to work, the number needing jobs would be 3.6 million. Using the 1.9 million figure, there would be 16.8 welfare recipients for each available job.

Are those going to be the only people competing for these jobs? There is also the unemployed, who are not helped by Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), who would be competing for the same jobs. To be fair, we didn't count those unemployed people with more than a high school education. Ultimately we obtained a ratio of 57.8 people who would be competing for each available position.

Things seem to be a little worse for those living in nonmetropolitan areas. In nonmetropolitan areas, we see 41.8 job-seekers for each available position. In metropolitan areas, we see 35.2 people for each available position.

Concluding Comments

I personally am not really optimistic about prospects for reduction of poverty in rural America and the rural Northeast. Poverty rates are higher in nonmetropolitan areas, and they are on the rise. It strikes me that recent legislation to reform the nation's basic anti-poverty programs is more about reducing welfare dependency and cutting costs than about reducing poverty.

As the globalization of the economy and industrial restructuring continue to rumble through the rural economy in the US and the Northeast, the prospects for further reductions in the demand for labor of low-income folks seem likely. Both of these broad trends conspire to suggest tough times ahead. I'd be more sanguine if there were signs from Washington that there were going to be honest attempts to make employers pay a living wage. Recent Republican proposals in the House Ways and Means Committee have called for cuts to the earned income tax credit, which is particularly disturbing.

I don't think we could have foreseen, three or four years ago, just how important your work during this conference is going to be. But the economic stormcloud headed for the poor, coupled with the decentralization of anti-poverty efforts that are about to become a reality, means that local efforts and innovations will feature much more prominently in the nation's anti-poverty efforts. I take some heart in the fact that by decentralizing our anti-poverty efforts, we have the opportunity to do a better job of tailoring anti-poverty efforts to the unique characteristics of the rural poor. This is welcome, since in the past we have had some bias towards the urban poor.

Please let me know if I can provide you with more information. Don't hesitate to call me if you need some information about your particular state or community.

Thank you for your time and attention.

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WORK AND INCOME OVERVIEW

-- by Dr. Ann Tickamyer

Dr. Ann Tickamyer is a professor of sociology at the University of Kentucky. Her work has been published extensively in leading social science journals in the areas of gender and work, labor markets, and rural poverty. Currently, Dr. Tickamyer is studying how low income households in rural areas pool resources from a variety of sources to make a living. From 1994-95, Dr. Tickamyer served as president of the Rural Sociological Society.

Introduction

My job during this workshop is to provide for you an overview of work and income as pathways from poverty. This is the third Pathways from Poverty workshop that I have been involved in, and each one has been interesting, exciting and stimulating. I think I have learned at least as much, if not more, than I have imparted at these workshops.

Pathways To Povery versus Pathways From Poverty

During the first Pathways from Poverty workshop that I was involved in, I kept having a recurring problem when discussing the program. When I was asked to take part in the conference, I kept referring to the program as "Pathways *to* Poverty" instead of "Pathways *from* Poverty." At the time, I was teaching a course on poverty, and I kept saying "pathways *to* poverty," over and over again.

My students looked at me as if to say, "Are you nuts? What are you talking about? We are supposed to be talking about pathways *from* poverty!"

I was using my students as sounding boards in order to get ready for the workshop, and I tried to think about why this was happening to me. I realized that as a professor, as an academic, and as a researcher, I am much more attuned to thinking about pathways *to* poverty; for instance, I think about the causes of poverty and the things that lead *to* poverty. I was not accustomed to searching for ways to prevent poverty. Most of my personal experiences involved looking at the causes, correlates and consequences of poverty. I was looking for past gaps, lapses and oversights in poverty theory and research, and criticizing public policy based on inaccurate theory or evidence. All of these tasks are fundamentally involved with explaining poverty and looking for explanations for why people are poor or why they stay poor. In other words, they focus on pathways *to* poverty.

This also was the goal of the first stage of the Rural Sociological Society Task Force on persistent poverty: a multidisciplinary group of scholars and researchers who evaluated current knowledge, theory and policy about poverty. Again, all of these tasks are oriented to understanding pathways *to* poverty. As one of these researchers/professors, I've become familiar with these tasks. They're ones that we're pretty good at. This is what we are trained to do. It is rare, however, to be called to think concretely about how this accumulated body of knowledge about poverty can be used as a means for devising pathways *from* poverty, even though most of us would heartily concur that this is the ultimate goal.

Sometimes we are taken to task for this. It is seen as a bias, as a problem with research and academic life, but what I would like to say is that all applied work, all policy analyses, all program design, all work designed to try to find means of escaping poverty—pathways *from* poverty—rests on a solid foundation of knowledge. Poverty policy and programs provide all too many examples of what is wrong with public policy based on bad theory and misinformation about who is poor and why they are poor.

Welfare and Poverty: Taking a Look at Faulty Assumptions

Currently there is a claim that originated more or less with the "think-tank" group in the Reagan era claiming that welfare provision, if not the primary cause of poverty and welfare dependency, is most definitely a major influence. In the 1980's, Charles Murray and other conservatives and analysts argued that welfare acts as a disincentive to seeking employment. They also argued that the structure of the welfare system creates forms of welfare dependency that ensure persistent poverty. The conclusion that these policy analysts drew from this idea was that if welfare was eliminated, people would seek and find gainful employment, work their way out of poverty and eliminate welfare dependency. This would save taxpayer's money as well as fix what these analysts thought of as a "very broken moral order."

At the time that these ideas first surfaced, this appeared to be a rather extreme but fringe assault on social welfare policies as we know them. This extreme position became all-out war when this theory became the prevailing and accepted model in the current political era. In other words, what was seen as coming extremely out of the end of a political spectrum is now

solidly accepted by all sorts of people. I don't want to spend a lot of time here, going into a lengthy critique of this argument, but I would like to say that virtually all of the evidence shows that the argument is logically flawed, fails to conform to the facts, and runs counter to the experience of other countries with much more generous and extensive social welfare systems than the United States and to the way welfare varies across the fifty states. The states with the most generous welfare systems are not the states with the most poor. In other words, this theory that welfare causes poverty is not grounded in basic knowledge about poverty. Nonetheless, this theory has become widely accepted in public opinion, policy making circles and has now become the foundation of all political parties' proposals and rhetoric about welfare reform. This flawed logic and misinformation is non-partisan: Clinton speaks about this approach, and Newt Gingrich speaks about this approach. The fringe approach has become the mainstream, and this idea has come about because of misinformation.

Now this example is particularly appropriate for this session on work and income because it makes a huge number of assumptions about the nature of work and income sources that are fatally flawed, have negatively contributed to policy debates on poverty and yet are easily correctable by basic knowledge and research in this area. What I would like to do is examine some of these assumptions about work and income as pathways *to* poverty, examine the evidence, and then link what we know to pathways *from* poverty. My focus will be on rural America, although much of this work applies to a broader context.

People-Based Poverty versus Place-Based Poverty

People-Based Poverty

Figure one is a summary of basic groundwork kinds of information that I would like to provide about work and income. What we've got here is something about the links between work and income. We can look at poverty in at least two ways. Poverty can be defined in terms of people who are poor or the places that are poor. Accounts of people-based poverty emphasize the lives of poor people, ask/discuss the questions: Who is likely to be poor, and for what reasons? What kinds of factors make them likely to be at-risk of poverty? If you look at the column marked people-based poverty, what you see is that gender, race ethnicity, age, education, household composition, residence and employment application are all risk factors. Women are more likely to be poor than men. Minorities are more likely to be poor than whites. Old people and young people are more at-risk, as well as poorly educated people, female headed households, etc. These are the kinds of things that I think you heard about yesterday when we were given an overview about the demography of poverty.

Place-Based Poverty

Let's also look at place-based poverty, which involves the communities, states and the regions that are poor. What we see

People-Based Poverty	Place-Based Poverty
Subject/Object of Study:	
Individuals	Communities
Groups	States
Lives of Poor People	Regions
	Labor Market Areas
Risk Factors:	
Gender	Rural
Race/Ethnicity	Inner City
Age	South
Education	Areas of Economic Decline/Exploitation
Household Composition	Low Wage Labor Markets
Residence	
Employment/Occupation	

Figure 1

here is that rural places are more likely to be poor as are inner cities. Rural and inner-city poverty tends to rival each other for the intensity of poverty. Certain areas of the country are more likely to be poor, such as the south and the southwest where areas of economic decline and exploitation are found—places that have few high paying jobs and low-wage labor markets. Furthermore, when you look at these kinds of risk factors, the more categories any individual group or place fall into, the more likely poverty will occur. Multiple categories of disadvantage create greater risk.

In looking at the two different types of poverty, people-based poverty and place-based poverty, we see that obviously there also is a relationship between them. While you can be poor and live where most folks are not poor, you also conversely can be rich and live in an impoverished region. Clearly the two are connected with the fortunes individuals have tied to the opportunities that exist in the areas where they are located. The crux of being poor in this society is to lack income. Employment is the primary source of income and the prime link between poverty of persons and poverty of place. Persons lack access to income while places fail to provide jobs to supply income. Stable employment and good wages keep people out of poverty. Places with strong economies that create and sustain jobs obviously are vital to overcoming poverty. Now I am not claiming that work and income are the only pathways to or from poverty, but they are certainly at the heart of the issue. Basically, neither people nor places can be considered in the absence of the other. This leads us to the figures that I have for you.

In figure two, we see an outline of the flawed theories and assumptions we have about poverty. We find that they involve both people and places and the links between them.

Flawed Theories and Assumptions about Poverty

1. **Reverse causation: Welfare causes poverty.**
2. **Single-factor explanation: Poverty programs should target poverty of individuals without poverty of place or place without individuals.**
3. **Faulty assumptions: People are poor because they don't work.**
4. **Oversimplification: All jobs are equal and any job is a good job.**
5. **Obfuscation: All jobs pay, and all people have the same opportunities.**

Figure 2

First Flawed Assumption: Welfare causes poverty.

Reverse Causation, the idea that welfare causes poverty, is the first flawed assumption that we discussed. This approach seeks answers to the causes of poverty in the failures of individuals, either deliberate failures—failure to seek work, failure to work hard—or unplanned but no less individual-based deficiencies—lack of education, and lack of training and skills that prevent people from qualifying for and obtaining good jobs. Policy implications that flow from this approach range from proposals to eliminate all welfare for able-bodied adults, to work-fare, to job training (re-training, education, and skills enhancement). The point is not that these proposals are all bad or all good, but rather even the best of them will not work if only the *motives* of poor people are considered, in other words, if you only consider the individual side or the people side of the equation.

Second Flawed Assumption: Poverty is the result of one cause, a single factor.

Single-factor explanation, the idea that pathways from poverty can be developed which target only the actions of individuals without considering place, or conversely look only at place without regard to people, is the second flawed assumption. The alternative perspective seeks answers to the causes of poverty in the structure of the economy. While this is much closer to the mark than the individual view, considered in isolation, it too is prone to lead to wrong-headed policies that stress job creation without regard to the nature of those jobs: what types of jobs are being created? the nature of the workforce? the impact on the people, land, environment, and the region? The history of economic development efforts is full of examples of subsidizing enterprises with little pay-off in actual numbers of jobs that have short- or long-term negative environmental consequences or that are doomed to fail for neglect of full understanding of the true cost the infrastructure needs. So—in other words, any decent understanding of pathways *from* poverty must understand this link between the causes, or the pathways *to* poverty that look at people and places. You have to look at both sides of the equation.

Third Flawed Assumption: People are poor because they won't work.

Let's go on to flawed assumption number three. This is the idea that people are poor because they won't work. I'm sure you all have run into this one all too many times. Partly, it comes from the previous assumption or the over-emphasis on individual explanations and people-based understanding. A common

The problem fueling public policy at this point is the idea that people who are poor are not living on their earnings but rather on hand-outs. - Ann Tickamyer

approach is to assume that people are poor because they don't or won't work. Thus, the solution to poverty is to enable or force people to take jobs. This is the kind of thing we are hearing about in welfare policy reform. Yet a very large proportion of poor people, especially in rural areas, are employed; many work full-time. The majority of income of poor people comes from their earnings. There are a lot of problems in the technical aspects of determining just who are the working poor. If you look at either workers who are poor or poor people who work, you find that it is a very substantial number of people. By some estimates, 40 percent of rural workers earned below-poverty-line wages. Three quarters of workers on farms fell into this category. In the late 1980s, almost 19 percent of people in households with poverty-level income worked full-time; well over half worked at least some of the time. I could supply lots of facts and figures, but basically what all the studies show is that most poor people work. The most recent research shows that, furthermore, the problem is growing. It also shows that for the other "at risk" groups, such as gender, race, etc., the problem is even worse. Certainly for rural residents there are higher rates of the working poor than among their urban counterparts. If you look at studies of income sources you find the same thing. The biggest source of income for poor people is earnings—money that they earn at jobs. Again, this is contrary to the stereotypes and rhetoric that is common in public policy, which claims that all those welfare bums are just living to collect the check; this is not true. I'm sure that I don't have to paint a more detailed picture, and that you all are aware of that. The problem fueling public policy at this point is the idea that people who are poor are not living on their earnings but rather on hand-outs. So—we have a very flawed assumption about what the causes of poverty are. Furthermore, many of the poor who don't work are actively seeking work or unemployed. Still, others would gladly work if it were possible or available, and a large proportion are not able to work for reasons of age or disability. Basically, especially in rural areas, there are relatively few persons who can be identified who are able-bodied and unwilling to work. Even among the persistently poor, persons who are poor over long stretches of time rather than just experiencing periodic episodes of poverty, there is very high labor force attachment.

Now I don't want to gloss over the real disadvantages that poor people bring to the labor market. There are severe problems, such as lack of human capital—lack of education and training— and lack of social capital—the skills, discipline and good work habits—that contribute to employment, but the bigger more serious issue is the lack of jobs, lack of stable jobs, lack of jobs with adequate wages and benefits, and lack of support (barriers) to enable people to take and hold on to jobs. Child care and transportation are two obvious barriers. Even if there is a job out there, there is the problem of finding a place for your child, or there is no way to get there; there's a big problem in being able to work. In other words, far more poverty rests on lack of work than lack of work effort, or lack of work motivation. Policies that assume unwillingness to work as the basis to poverty miss the mark. Thus, pathways to and from poverty must be sought in the nature of work and the match between work and workers.

Fourth Flawed Assumption: Oversimplification of the Problem

There's a tendency to think that all jobs are equal: any job is a good job. We've already seen that employment per se provides no guaranteed protection from poverty. Typically in rural areas not only are employment opportunities scarce, but, where jobs exist, they are likely to be low-wage with low or no benefits, unstable or seasonal. In Kentucky, which is one of the poorest states in the region and the nation, the jobs in rural areas tend to be dominated by resource-based industries, such as mining, agriculture and low-wage manufacturing. Poverty is endemic in part because both the best jobs and the worst jobs are unable to provide secure and stable incomes to their workers. For example, some of the highest paying jobs are found in coal mining, and, all other things being equal, this industry supplies relatively high wages, but, in fact, areas that are dominated by mining are among the poorest areas because it is a highly volatile industry: it suffers long-term decline, it's becoming increasingly mechanized, it's permanently put many people out of work. As the demand goes up and down, miners spend long periods of time out of work. Furthermore, it tends to depress the availability of any other kind of work in that area. Mining areas tend to sustain few other forms of economic activity, so there are no alternative forms of employment either for displaced miners or for their spouses and family members. Workers who benefit from mining's high wages are scarce. They must put up with numerous bouts of unemployment, short work life, significant danger and other forms of economic instability that limit income and employment opportunities. Furthermore, if you could think back to who is at risk, the risks are not evenly spread among all groups. Mining is highly sex segregated. There are very few women who have ever had access to high-paid mining jobs, but for the few who have these jobs, fewer still remain in what is a contracting, declining industry. Therefore, women, especially female heads of households, have had very limited opportunities and great risk of poverty in these areas.

Job Opportunities

You can paint similar scenarios in the rural manufacturing sector. Rural industrialization, for example, was once seen as a great source of income and jobs for poor people in poor rural areas, but this has not worked out. Manufacturing jobs seek even lower-wage workers in even more depressed areas of the nation. They move overseas to capitalize on cheap labor. Agriculture as we know it is in decline. I think you know the picture of what the job opportunities are in rural areas. The traditional kinds of work opportunities for people in rural areas

are disappearing, and it's making it more and more difficult to seek pathways from poverty in work.

New sources of jobs are equally problematic. For example, tourism is often promoted as a source of new development, but tourism is a very poor source of income: it produces the lowest paying jobs, it does little to improve individual or place-based well-being. Basically, however, rural development poverty cases have focused on job creation; to the extent that they have done this, they rarely take cognizance of varieties of employment or the differential impact on local economies. Industrial traction programs have long since been discredited as ineffective development policies. Yet, if you look at state legislators and economic development organizations within states and regions, most of their efforts are focused on chasing industry. They are offering bigger and better incentives to bring in new industry to provide jobs that will ultimately not prove adequate to the task of helping significant numbers of people out of poverty. The kind of assumption that any job is a good job and all jobs are means of escape from poverty is an oversimplification of what the true story is.

These kinds of ideas have intensified recently because global economic restructuring has placed new pressures on many workers, especially rural workers. The tendency to create poor paying, low wage, low benefit jobs has become an increasing strategy of many industries as they seek to reduce and avoid costs of production and seek ways to avoid paying the costs of hiring people. What this has meant is that many people who were formerly full-time workers are now temporary workers. Many industries now subcontract. There is an overall trend to developing an informal economy. These trends, on the one hand, have provided new sources of income for rural residents, but there has been great cost in the form of unregulated activities typically paid on a piece-rate basis and with little access to social insurance, health benefits, or health, welfare and safety provisions. So—the kinds of large-scale, world-wide, global economic trends that are affecting even the most remote corners of the United States and the globe, in general, mean that jobs still are increasingly problematic for providing escape from poverty. The problem continues.

Formal versus Informal Employment

Jobs are a problem. Increasingly, people work but they don't work in real (formal) labor-market jobs. As more and more jobs have moved away from access to benefits and protection of formal labor markets, we find new evidence of rising informal activity. What this means is that the increased visibility of work in the informal economy where people don't work for an employer, don't work for a regulated job, and don't necessarily have formal wages or access to benefits, now move to work in self-employment or small businesses which are marginal, or do odd-jobs or produce some product that is used to raise money. The increased visibility of this work makes it easier to recognize that there are lots of different forms of work. Formal employment is only one of the most recognizable and, in many ways, the most privileged forms of such work. There are all sorts of jobs and all sorts of forms of work that don't pay wages. Typically, we tend to classify work that pays wages as productive or that which produces commodities—goods or services. Reproductive work can be described as work which contributes to the formation and maintenance of households and families, such as childbearing, child rearing, household management and food preparation. Yet this kind of work is unrecognizable, uncounted, trivialized and, most certainly, unpaid. This brings us to the fifth flawed theory and assumption about poverty, which is that all jobs pay.

Fifth Flawed Assumption: All Jobs Pay.

Work that is necessary—which takes up time and which takes up labor and effort—doesn't necessarily pay wages and certainly doesn't pay people to get out of poverty. It is no accident that this work traditionally has been performed by women. Despite being unpaid, women and the work that they perform is important: it is necessary, it contributes to household survival, and it produces the services and goods which are necessary for people to survive. It also is part of a larger strategy of household survival in which people in households pool resources and allocate their time and effort inside the household in formal jobs when they can get it, in informal jobs where they are able to, and in the household in general in order to try to create a way to make a living in order to survive. What this basically means is that there is a whole complex mix of activities that people are engaged in, all of which are work, but which are not necessarily paid jobs. Unfortunately, this is where researchers really fall down on the job, because we don't know much about these activities except that they are out there. We know that the activities are increasing, and that more and more people are participating, but we haven't studied them very well in the past. What we also know, however, is that public policy either ignores these forms of work or takes actions to make it worse. We have seen, for example, that the former safety net is divided in such a way so that people who lose a "real" job or job in the formal economy have access to a relatively generous and non-stigmatized form of welfare or unemployment compensation. This is a form of welfare, but we call it social insurance. Persons engaged in child care, on the other hand, which also is work but not formal labor-market activity, are not typically paid well, are not valued and respected and can apply for Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) if they lose their sources of income. This is a form of welfare that we call "welfare." In other words, it is stigmatized; it typically gets lower benefits, and it is about to be dismantled if all the current rhetoric is about to be followed through. We don't call all the kinds of work that people do "work." We don't always value it, respect it and understand that it is necessary to keep families,

households and communities going. This means that we have public policy that is intrinsically flawed and problematic. It means that we have policies that cannot understand pathways *from* poverty because they don't understand pathways *to* poverty. How can you force people to work if you don't provide means for dealing with their children? How can you force people to work if there is no transportation? How can you force people to work when they are already working without providing other means of getting those tasks done?

Moving from "Pathways to Poverty" to "Pathways from Poverty"

There are a number of other issues in this area that I could talk about. What I would like to do now is turn to how these pathways to poverty and the faulty assumptions—bad theory and research, and misunderstanding about theory and research—can help us move out of pathways to poverty into pathways from poverty.

Finding Pathways From Poverty

What are the implications of work and income as pathways *to* poverty leading to pathways *from* poverty? I would like to summarize a number of conclusions that I personally have drawn from this analysis. Figure three shows these conclusions. These are not points that will lead to programs per se, but these are policy issues that should inform others to design good welfare policy and programs to help people escape from poverty, and find pathways from poverty.

First Conclusion: Poverty has to be tackled at a variety of levels and with a variety of factors.

The first conclusion that I draw is that poverty has to be tackled at a variety of levels and with a variety of factors. We have to look at individuals and households, families and communities, and states and regions in mutually reinforcing ways. It doesn't work to prepare individuals for jobs that do not exist or do not pay. You cannot attract jobs that do little to improve the economic fortunes of either their holders or their communities, if they do not pay enough to offer a truly positive way out of poverty. In other words, it is not enough to prepare people for new ways out of poverty. It is not enough to work only at the community level. We have got to look at both.

Second Conclusion: It is important to make work pay.

The second conclusion is that it is really important to make work pay. It is important to pursue policies that make work attractive. Rather than assuming that people need to be coerced to work, we should find policies that make work pay. Examples include guaranteeing minimum wage to provide information about poverty income or income tax credit and access to health insurance. All of these are likely to have bigger impact on poverty. A few years ago, in fact at the very first Pathways from Poverty conference, I could say that these kinds of things were

1. Tackle poverty at a variety of levels and factors, such as:

individual household
community state
region, as well as nationally,

in mutually reinforcing ways

2. Make work pay.

3. Pursue local and state initiatives in these areas.

4. Mobilize politically from the grass roots level on up.

5. Recognize the full costs of economic development policies, including:

whom they will benefit,
and whom they will hurt.

6. Recognize:

diversity in devising policy for different groups and regions;

when it is appropriate to tailor or target policies;

when more universal approaches are needed, and

when a mixed strategy is desirable.

7. Listen to the analysis of those who are the subjects of such policy

Figure 3

in the works. Unfortunately, the picture has changed drastically since then, and these are not looking very likely at this point, but they are crucial and fundamental.

Third Conclusion: We must work at all levels to create pathways from poverty.

We must also work at all levels to create pathways from poverty. It is important to work at the local level, the state level and the national level, but increasingly in this environment in which more and more effort is going to be funneled into state and local levels, much of that effort is going to have to be funneled there too. We must mobilize our political efforts, which leads to the fourth point.

Fourth Conclusion: We must mobilize politically from the grassroots level on up.

We must mobilize politically from the grassroots level on up. Many of you may have heard many of the horror stories that are going around about the failure of the war on poverty. Other analysts who are less often heard of these days suggest quite the opposite. The war on poverty wasn't such a failure in itself. Its biggest problem was that it came too close to succeeding, and it threatened many people and many entrenched interests. There are lessons to be learned from the near success or the almost success of the efforts to politically mobilize poor people from the war on poverty and its time and the current assault on poor people. Those kinds of lessons should be looked at again.

Fifth Conclusion: We must recognize the full cost of economic development policies.

The fifth conclusion is that we must recognize the full cost of economic development policies, including who they will benefit and who they will hurt. What has been typical of economic development policies is this: bring in jobs, don't worry about the kinds of jobs, don't worry about the cost to the environment, don't worry about whose backyard they are in or what kind of damage the bad job will have. It is important to look at the full cost of the economic development policies. Will there be net job creation or loss? Net gains or losses in revenues, and for whom? Will local people get jobs or will labor be imported? Who will pay?

Sixth Conclusion: We must recognize diversity and devise policy appropriately.

The sixth point is that we must recognize diversity and devise policy for different groups and different regions, and, when it is appropriate, we must tailor or target policies when it is more important to get more universal policies. A lot of this comes out of the specific recognition that there is differential risk. We saw at the very beginning that there are huge differences in who is at-risk of poverty. Well, this also is true of who should be the beneficiaries of different policies. Now there are lots of other political considerations in terms of determining how policies should be directed or whether they should be universal or directed toward specific people. It is important to at least understand who will benefit, who will be hurt, and to know what kinds of policies are necessary under what circumstances.

Final Conclusion: Listen to the poor, give them a voice in devising pathways from poverty.

The last point I'd like to make is the most important, and it leads us directly into the rest of this workshop. Listen to the analysis of those who are the subjects of such policy. It is easy for those of us who are not poor, who are many steps away from poverty, to pontificate about the meaning of poverty and how to find pathways *from* poverty. But none of these efforts will ever work unless we also engage the effort, energy and understanding of those who actually experience it. In short, pathways from poverty must build on knowledge of pathways to poverty. The dialogue that we engage in should be motivation for effective efforts to mobilize the combined energies of peoples and groups from many different places with widely different experiences, backgrounds and knowledge to engage in a new effort to alleviate poverty.

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Poor Kids in a Rich Nation: Eating the Seed Corn

-- by Dr. Patricia Garrett

Patricia Garrett is a sociologist with the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She has interests in family policy, maternal employment, child care, and children's developmental status. Dr. Garrett served as chairperson of the Family and Children working group of the Task Force on Persistent Poverty of the Rural Sociological Society.

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to provide you with questions and answers about the status of children in this country. We are plagued with the problem of having so many poor children in our wealthy country, and need to find the answers to this problem. I'd like to discuss some issues that may help to provide some of these answers. The principle issues I will discuss are:

Who is responsible for children's welfare?

What are reasonable objectives and viable strategies for anti-poverty initiatives?

Which children are poor?

Poverty, like war, is bad for children and other living things. Why is that?

How is rural childhood poverty special?

Ideological Issues Concerning Responsibility and Family Values

We have heard a great deal recently about "family values." It is useful to put this dialogue into a comparative perspective. The dominant ideology in the United States holds that family welfare is a private rather than a public responsibility. Public intervention is appropriate only when family support breaks down.

An alternative vision holds that we are jointly responsible for each other's welfare. Families have special responsibilities for their members, but we all have a responsibility to each other. From this perspective, public policy should support families, especially their efforts to raise children. This means that a comprehensive set of programs needs to be offered, among them paid parental leave, child allowances, accessible medical care, and subsidized education, including that at the pre-kindergarten level.

These programs are conspicuous by their absence in the current political debate regarding family values. This is extremely important from the point of view of childhood poverty because such programs tend to benefit poor families more than rich families. That is, they redistribute resources from the top towards the bottom. In the former Czechoslovakia, for example, kindergarten programs for children 3-6 years old were the single most effective way to benefit low income families. It is young families, with new workers at the bottom of their earning curve, who experience the greatest benefit from universalistic programs.

"Family-friendly" policies are universalistic—all families benefit, but low income families benefit proportionately more than others. Even so, they are fair and do not stigmatize their beneficiaries. They enjoy popular support.

In the relative absence of pro-family policies, poor children in the US are seen as a population requiring special services. Poverty is seen as a problem of competing interest groups, competitive with the general interest; resources that support special interests are diverted from the "rest of us." This is a mind-set that is utterly foreign to most industrialized nations where the assumption is that children are the joint responsibility of community and family. Whether we act on it or not, it takes an entire village to raise a child.

Anti-Poverty Objectives and Strategies

Understanding that US policy is out of synch with all industrialized countries and most of the world, how can we conceptualize anti-poverty initiatives? A comprehensive policy to overcome poverty would have several complementary objectives. These include an effort to reduce the prevalence of poverty, to limit its duration and depth, to ameliorate its consequences, and to prevent its intergenerational transmission.

Three basic strategies are consistent with these objectives:

a.) **risk minimization**—to avoid spells of poverty and the intergenerational transmission of poverty by preventing employment-relevant disabilities and asset depletion;

b.) **career development**—to increase earned income by enhancing coping skills important in both the workplace and the family; and

c.) **asset development**—to increase wealth and expand alternatives by supporting capital accumulation.

These three strategies redefine traditional conceptualizations because they can cross sectors such as education, health, economy, etc. This, in turn, may suggest new ways of designing anti-poverty programs so that benefits are complementary. I'd like to provide a few health-related examples.

In the area of **risk minimization**, there is a policy support-

ing good pre- and post-natal care for mother and child which improves child outcomes, and age-appropriate wellness programs minimize processes whereby problems become disabilities and subsequently handicaps. Work-related disabilities are the single strongest determinant of poverty status. A less obvious example is an employment/retraining policy that guarantees all who want to work at a decent job. Because of the centrality of work to self-concept and social regard, there are important and positive mental health consequences of productive and satisfying jobs.

In the area of **career development**, it is necessary to conceptualize career broadly to include the integration of work and family roles and the way that this integration changes over a life course. From this broad perspective, one would consider formal education and human capital formation jointly with issues concerning family planning, such as the timing and number of children and parenting skills and responsibilities.

In discussing **asset development**, there is the problem of people who live from one paycheck to another. These people experience crises if the checks stop. Those who are poor or near poor have few assets, so the spiral into acute poverty can be dramatic and rapid. Health insurance is a protection because families' assets are not depleted by major illness. In a less obvious fashion, child allowances that disproportionately benefit lower than higher income families can foster some accumulation of assets by young families.

The basic thesis of this talk is that a child-centered analysis of poverty policy would emphasize risk minimization. This would be one aspect of a generalized preventive strategy, consistent with a public health orientation. Risk minimization provides a good basis for career development and asset development strategies as children grow into adults. Some of my research based on a large national data set suggests that improvements in family income are most beneficial to the most disadvantaged youngsters. This means that the most "at-risk" kids are the most likely to benefit when family income increases.

The policy relevance of this approach is transparent. Such an approach is both humane and cost effective. Moreover, it allows individuals to express their interests and talents. Such an orientation is not paternalistic; rather, it is supportive of human development.

Childhood Poverty

The Task Force on Persistent Poverty of the Rural Sociological Society presented its findings in an anthology entitled Persistent Poverty in Rural America (Westview Press, 1993). The first chapter by Bill Hoppe provides a demographic overview of trends in rural poverty and the eighth chapter by Garrett and Lennox focuses on families and children.

Before proceeding, I want to make a simple point. Female employment is an anti-poverty program, organized by families, especially in reaction to the economic crisis of the 1980's. Many more families would be in poverty today were it not for the fact that women entered, reentered, or remained in the labor force. The biggest increases occurred among mothers with very young children. The latest data suggest that more than half the mothers of infants are economically active.

In this context, I want to show you a few graphs that may focus your attention on the specifics of rural childhood poverty. Figure one illustrates childhood poverty in the period of 1960-1990. The bars on the left illustrate metropolitan regions, while those on the right illustrate non-metropolitan regions. In both regions, there is a dramatic drop in childhood poverty rates between 1960 and 1970. This demonstrates that the War on Poverty worked, especially in rural areas. Between 1980 and 1990, by contrast, the trend was towards increased poverty rates, in both metro and non-metro areas.

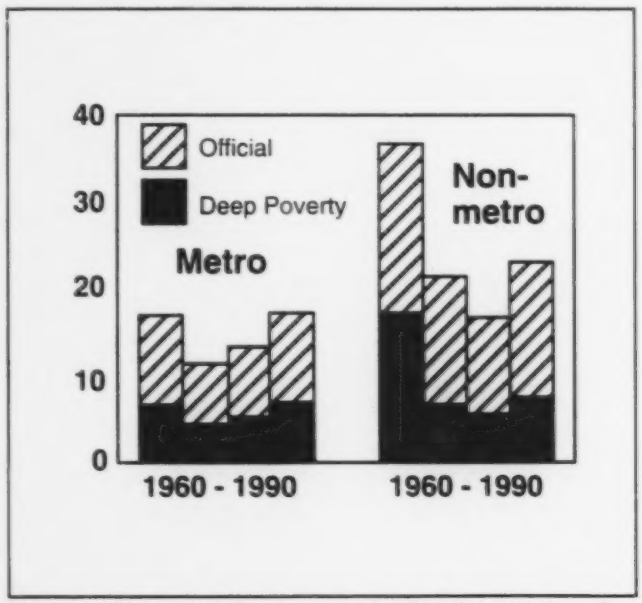

Figure 1: Children in Poverty: 1960-1990 (from Lichter, D. and Eggebeen, D., 1992, Child Poverty and the Changing Rural Family, *Rural Sociology*, **57**, 151-172.

Race and ethnicity are also strongly associated with childhood poverty status. Figure two illustrates what we all know, namely that poverty is more prevalent among blacks than whites. The magnitude of this difference, however, may not be widely appreciated. What is certainly not appreciated is that the rate of poverty among non-metropolitan children is nearly as high as that of children living in central city ghettos.

Deep poverty remains problematic throughout the period. Deep poverty is defined as 50% of the official poverty level, which itself has declined in buying power over the years. Deep poverty is a very serious issue, especially for children.

Childhood poverty is strongly associated with family structure. Children born into single-parent, typically female-

Although the work emphasis of many of the current proposals is a needed change, employment alone in the absence of supportive services and notable medical and child care will leave many children poor. - Patricia Garrett

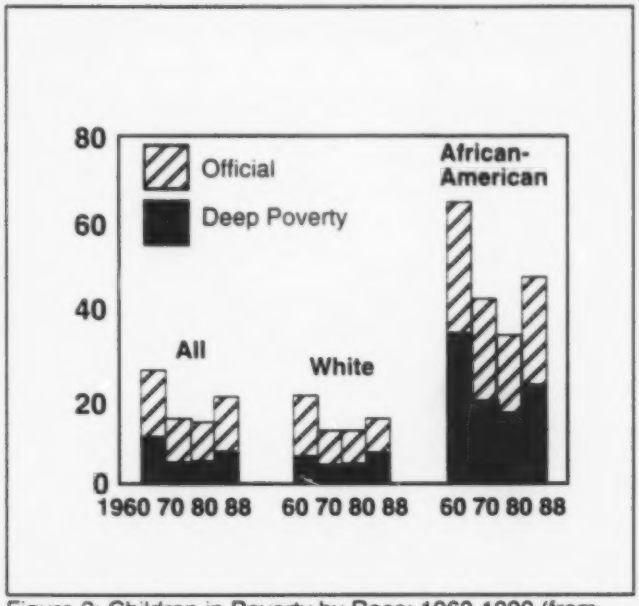

Figure 2: Children in Poverty by Race: 1960-1990 (from Eggebeen, D. and Lichter, D., 1991, Race, Family Structure, and Changing Poverty among American Children, *American Sociological Review*, 56, 801-817.

headed, households are much more likely to be poor than those who live in dual parent families. Figure three shows that proportionately more non-metropolitan children live in intact families, but childhood poverty is still higher for non-metropolitan than metropolitan children with two parents.

What this graph does not show is what other studies demonstrate. Low wages, underemployment, and unemployment all influence the poverty status of families with children. Young adults with young children have suffered the most in today's negative economic climate. Many poor children have parents who both work. Because the wages that they command are low, employment alone does not necessarily lift children out of poverty. This reality is extremely relevant for the contemporary debate on welfare reform. Although the work emphasis of many of the current proposals is a needed change, employment alone in the absence of supportive services and notable medical and child care will leave many children poor.

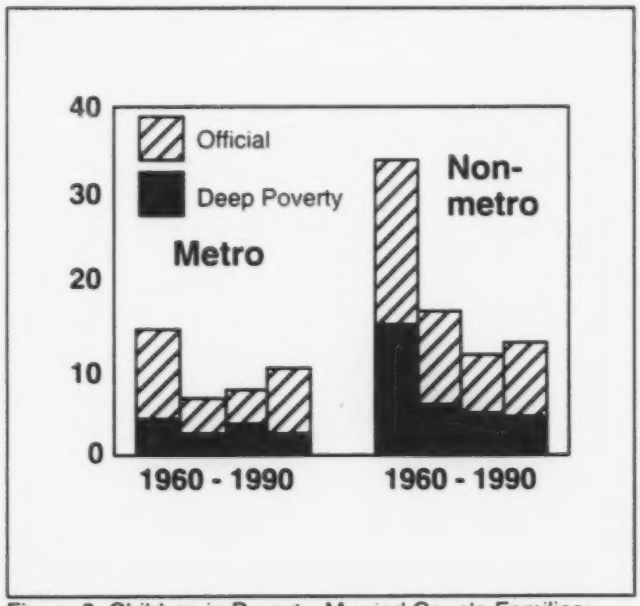

Figure 3: Children in Poverty, Married Couple Families: 1960-1990 (from Lichter, D., and Eggebeen, D., 1992, Child Poverty and the Changing Rural Family, *Rural Sociology*, 57, 151-172.

Why Poverty is Bad for Kids

It seems intuitively obvious that poverty, like war, is not good for children or other living things. From a potentially endless list of awfuls, certain issues seem particularly important.

Parental poverty may lead to poor birth outcomes, notably prematurity, low birth weight, and chemical dependence. Such outcomes are related to complex interactions among available services and maternal behavior. The inadequate availability utilization of prenatal care may reflect negatively on the characteristics of the service delivery program, such as physical distance, cultural characteristics, cleanliness, etc. Patient characteristics, including mothers' youth or other conditions, may render birth outcomes problematic under the best of circumstances. The simple rule of thumb is that the later a problem is recognized, the more serious it will become, and the more likely it is to become debilitating.

Family poverty may lead to child undernutrition. Young children face developmental milestones in rapid succession. Chronic poverty has captured the imagination of policy makers and scholars, but episodic poverty is a serious issue for children who need food when they are hungry, warmth when they are cold, and comfort when they are disoriented. This has some immediate implications for program development. If parents are unwilling or unable to access essentials like food via food stamps or food cupboards, children can suffer.

Undernutrition places children at a disadvantage relative to their well-nourished peers. Undernutrition must be very severe to result in brain damage. Irritability and distractibility with school failure are far more common.

Poverty is not the only source of inadequate diets for kids, but hunger remains a serious, if ignored, problem. Hunger is more difficult to address in rural than urban communities, especially during the summer when schools are not in session and distances make food service virtually impossible.

Attempts to cut the food lunch program have recently gone down to a well-publicized defeat. Meanwhile, the child care food program remains very much in jeopardy. It needs to be recognized also that there are ethnic biases built into those

menus.

Family poverty may lead to parental stress and punitive parenting. Poverty is at the top of the list of stressors, right up there with the death of a spouse. Poverty is also likely to be a chronic stressor, and therefore a constant source of distress.

The literature suggests that economic distress rather than low income is problematic. People in the same objective circumstances may interpret their positions differently, and therefore may or may not experience economic distress. Economic distress is related to punitive parenting.

Punitive parenting has many overtones, but it suggests several ways by which parents may fail to provide a nurturing environment for children's development. Parents may withdraw emotionally from their children, remain inattentive to children's emotional needs, which vary according to developmental status, and/or hold inappropriate expectations for children, especially if they do not concur with parents' rather than children's needs.

This literature rings true, but its empirical basis is actually very weak. More than anything else, it reflects theoretical notions of what proper parenting looks like, such as the middle class WASP styles of relating to children. There are important cultural differences in expectations that adults have for children. Bangladeshi infants, for example, are potty-trained by six months of age—scandalously early by US standards, but it seems to do the infants no harm. Japanese children are trained to be much less individualistic and much more group-oriented than we are. The point is that there are legitimate cultural differences in child-rearing expectations and practices that are not reflected in the literature on punitive parenting. No doubt that the young mother in the supermarket pulling a child around by the ear and beating up on him is not doing a good job of parenting, but other behaviors which reflect legitimate cultural differences are not reflected in the literature on punitive parenting.

Strong and dense social support networks buffer parents and protect them somewhat from stressors. Anthropological and sociological research suggests that families and children must be considered in their natural social environments that typically encompass more than the nuclear family. In practical terms, this means that both individual and family-focused analysis should be incorporated within a larger social context that includes kith and kin.

The research on ethnic minorities is particularly weak. Consequently, it is not clear whether particular social policies that target the husband/wife nuclear family are particularly counterproductive in certain ethnic communities. What is the family? That is the underlying question here. Social policy is clearly biased against matri-focal or multi-generational families, not to mention single-sex families. This issue deserves more attention than it receives.

Female-headed households are important because they are more vulnerable to poverty than dual-parent families. A spouse can make an economic contribution to family welfare, provide emotional support, and assist with home maintenance tasks such as child care and housekeeping.

Current research suggests that single parent households are problematic not because the male role model is absent or inaccessible, but because mothers are simply overworked, tired, and lacking the energy to deal constructively with children. An interesting, but relatively unexplored question, is the extent to which two-job couples experience a time overload when it comes to family maintenance activities. The fact remains, however, that women on the average earn less than men. They are more likely to be poor. Poverty itself is a stressor that is exacerbated by overwork.

Extended families and relatives can provide many kinds of support including financial assistance, crisis management, child care, and, very importantly, role modeling. The latter is especially important for young mothers who need to learn how to parent even as they prepare themselves for their adult roles.

The literature emphasizes the positive role of kin, especially grandmothers; but kin relations are characterized by reciprocity. Kinship is a double-edged sword on which one balances rights and obligations. Relationships are both emotional and contradictory. Extended families are likely to be important, especially in stable, rural communities and among ethnic minorities.

African-Americans are estimated to have a 30% higher incidence of extended families than other ethnic groups. Certainly, research among Latinos would come up with a similarly high number.

Family poverty may lead to a child feeling that she is less worthy than her more affluent peers. Kids know that it is not cool to be poor, and they easily come to believe that they are less worthy than their peers born into more comfortable circumstances. Consumerism has its consequences.

Kids know that it is not cool to be poor, and they easily come to believe that they are less worthy than their peers born into more comfortable circumstances. Consumerism has its consequences. – Patricia Garrett

In the not-so-distant past, people felt pride because they were poor but honest. Indeed, many, especially those raised in rural areas, never felt themselves deprived because everyone enjoyed modest circumstances. Surnames were important, because they suggested an honorable/dishonorable parentage. The work of Janet Fitchen demonstrated that discrimination happens even in ethnically homogeneous communities.

The interpersonal dimension of conflict has been minimized in most idealized discussions of rural communities. Many rural communities are characterized by inter-family animosities of long duration that take forms other than that of the Hatfields and the McCoys. In stratified societies, such as those that are found across most of the rural South, it is simply naive to assume mutually respectful relations across class, ethnic, religious, and gender lines. Bigotry is alive and well. It is part of the reality that children live every day.

Family poverty may lead to children's poor academic performance and subsequently limited employment opportunities. Most discussions of childhood poverty have embraced the notion that formal education equals human capital development, which equals escape from poverty. This assumes that children need to get through the existing system and that parents need to prepare children to succeed.

This orientation has obvious merits, but also severe limitations. Principal among the limitations is an uncritical stand towards the current educational system that has manifest failures, especially with regard to ethnic and cultural minorities. The situation is inherently contradictory; education is obviously an important pathway from poverty, but the current system favors a narrow set of learning styles. Schools are generally not pluralistic nor multi-cultural, and only innovative programs emphasize cooperative learning or call-and-response activities.

There is ample evidence that teachers actively discriminate against girls, ethnic minorities, poor children, and those from non-traditional families. Academic performance, therefore, reflects a subtle interaction between a child's interests and capacities and the teacher's prejudices. This has real consequences for children's academic attainment and their subsequent occupational placements.

The Specificity of Rural Poverty for Children

Communities may actively discourage eligible families from applying for benefits. The "nastiness factor" may be a serious issue, especially in highly stratified rural communities in the South. Where the local elite and/or the populace oppose public expenditures, especially if they originate with the federal government, it will be difficult to get transfer payments to their intended beneficiaries.

Commitment to self-reliance makes some rural residents reluctant to apply for welfare services. When parents fail to file for benefits that would enhance the health and nutritional status of children, especially young children, the long-term consequences for children are negative. Policy-makers must recognize that there is a contradiction between trying to minimize the economic dependency of adults and serving the immediate needs of children. In the current policy debate, children's needs have been relatively ignored.

The social service network in rural communities is less dense than in urban areas, and the quality of available services may be inadequate due to problems in recruiting staff and funding programs. Low population density places objective limits on what services can be provided in a cost-effective fashion. Nevertheless, the absence of subsidies to preventive programs, be they in education or health, creates a demand for more expensive interventions. Children with special needs provide an important illustration of the general problem. Effective early intervention can prevent some conditions from becoming disabilities, enhancing the lives of the child and his or her family and minimizing the cost to the public. All programs must be tailored to the reality of the community, a reality that includes population density as well as ethnicity, religion, and social class.

Poor rural communities do not have the administrative infrastructure to administer programs and compete effectively for funds with affluent, urban districts. Although such communities frequently tax at a higher rate, the absolute income from property taxes is low. Infrastructure costs, such as that for roads and hospitals, are high. Regional inequality is a reality, even if states engage in programs to redistribute resources to poor areas, such as an education improvement program. In poor, rural counties, staffing of county government is minimal. That means that capacity to administer block grants is minimal.

My research in North Carolina, for example, demonstrates that counties with a high need for subsidized child care slots revert their money to the state because they cannot administer the paperwork. The monies are then redistributed to affluent counties who have an active child care support program and can spend more funds. There is no reason to think that this applies only to subsidized child care or only to North Carolina.

I am very concerned about the emphasis placed on block grants in current discussions of budgetary and welfare reform. Our current policies have allowed enormous regional equalities to persist. Block granting them will, in my judgment, be a disaster for citizens in poor, rural communities. That includes our youngest citizens.

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HUMAN CAPITAL AND POVERTY IN RURAL AMERICA

-- by Dr. Daniel Lichter

Daniel T. Lichter, professor of sociology and director of the Population Research Institute at The Pennsylvania State University, has published widely on the topics of rural poverty, family change, and racial inequality. He is a member of the Rural Sociological Society's Task Force on Persistent Rural Poverty. In 1995, Dr. Lichter received Penn State's Distinction in the Social Sciences Award and the Rural Sociological Society's Excellence in Research Award.

Editor's note: We are unable to provide a transcribed version of the text for Daniel Lichter's presentation "Human Capital and Poverty in Rural America." The author has suggested that we print the overheads and introduction used for the presentation, and we have honored that suggestion here.

Introduction

Welfare reform—to "end welfare as we know it"—has been motivated by several political considerations. It's a way to cut the federal budget deficit. It's a way to curry the favor of constituencies back home who, rightly or wrongly, see current welfare programs as the cause of many of our social problems, such as illegitimacy, crime and idleness. Finally, it's viewed as necessary to promote personal responsibility among the poor and welfare recipients, and to reinforce the American values of work and self-sufficiency. Welfare recipients are expected to adhere to certain behavioral standards—for example, they should work, they should bear children only if married, and they should be better parents. This comes in the form of workfare, wedfare, and learnfare programs.

Proposed caps on welfare receipt—two years consecutively and five years total—and built-in work requirements reflect the new paternalism in welfare policy. Block grants presumably will motivate states to provide additional education and training programs for welfare users in order to meet certain employment targets. And, because the poor themselves cannot count on a lifetime of support from the government, personal responsibility will be restored. The individual calculus will be clear: stay in school, get some job experience, and seek additional training.

But is education and training—human capital—the answer to poverty and welfare dependency, especially in rural areas? This session addresses this question. Clearly, rural America suffers from a shortage of human capital. But, as I will argue here, solving the rural problem of poverty will require something more than simply providing rural people with additional education or training. The fundamental problem resides in the low wages and inadequate employment opportunities found in rural America, especially among young adults, minorities, women, and the least educated. Rural poverty results from shortages of good jobs rather than shortages of good workers.

Table 1: Poverty Rates by Education Level and Race, Persons Aged 25 and Over, 1991

	Total	White	Black	Hispanic
No High School Diploma	25.2	21.8	40.3	32.0
High School Only	9.6	7.8	23.6	15.2
Some College	6.5	5.5	14.6	8.8
Bachelor's degree or more	3.1	2.6	5.2	6.3
Total	10.7	8.8	25.0	21.3

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Table 2: Distribution of Educational Attainments of Metropolitan and Nonmetropolitan Population, 1971-1991

%population age 25 or older with:	1971	1981	1991	% Change 71-91
Metropolitan				
< High School	39.9	27.7	19.7	-50.6
High School	35.1	36.8	37.5	6.8
> High School	25.0	35.5	42.9	71.6
Nonmetropolitan				
< High School	50.4	36.0	28.2	-44.0
High School	33.1	38.7	42.5	28.4
> High School	16.6	25.3	29.3	76.5

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-20. Educational Attainment in the United States (various years). U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.

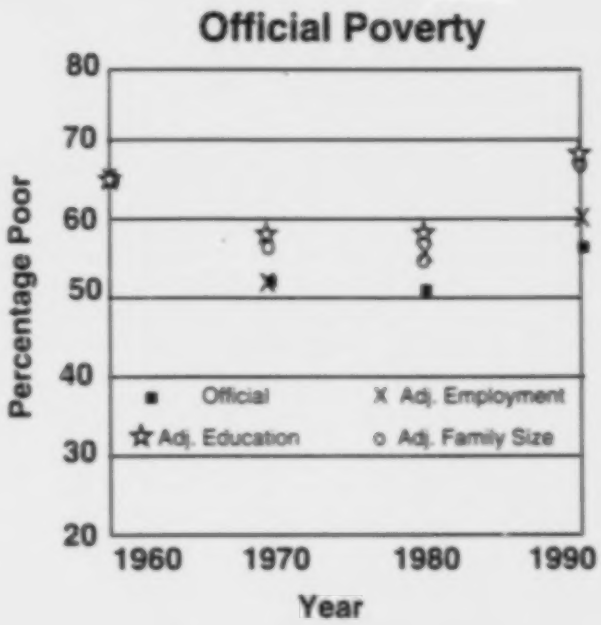

Figure 1: Crude and Adjusted Poverty Rates Among Nonmetro Children in Female-Headed Families, 1960-1990 (from Lichter and Eggebeen, 1992)

Table 3; Percentage of Low Earners, Rural and Urban Workers, by Education, 1979 and 1987

Rural Labor Force Group	1979	1987
High School Dropout	47.3	57.1
High School Graduate	29.2	43.4
Some College	22.4	33.6
Four Yrs. College or More	17.8	25.5
Urban Labor Force Group		
High School Dropout	39.9	53.7
High School Graduate	22.3	30.7
Some College	16.8	21.4
Four Yrs. College or More	14.1	16.2

Source: Gorham (1992) -- Author's estimates from Bureau of Census Data
Note: Annual earnings are adjusted for weeks and hours of work.

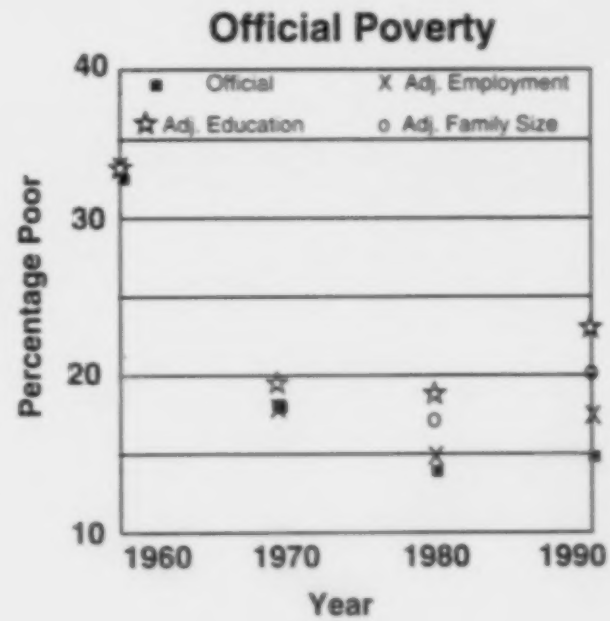

Figure 2: Crude and Adjusted Poverty Rates Among Nonmetro Children in Married-Couple Families, 1960-1990 (from Lichter and Eggebeen, 1992)

Table 4: Status Dropout Rates of Metropolitan Population by Ethnic Categories, 1981-1991.

%population age 16-24 who have not completed high school and are not enrolled:	1981	1986	1991	% Change 81-91
Metropolitan				
Total	13.1	12.0	12.8	-2.3
White	12.3	11.8	12.8	4.1
Black	17.5	13.9	14.5	-17.1
Hispanic	32.6	30.0	35.6	9.2
Nonmetropolitan				
Total	16.4	13.1	11.3	-31.1
White	15.0	12.8	11.4	-24.0
Black	21.7	15.1	9.3	-57.1
Hispanic	36.4	31.6	29.1	-20.1

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-20. Educational Attainment in the United States (various years). U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.

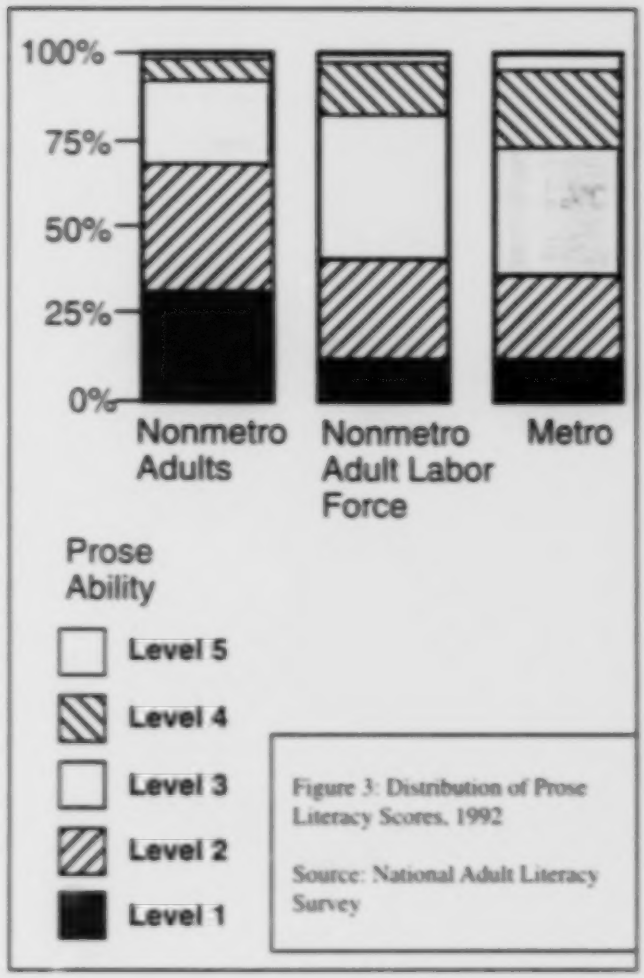

Figure 3: Distribution of Prose Literacy Scores, 1992

Source: National Adult Literacy Survey

Table 5: Profile of Scholastic Aptitiude Test Takers, by Location of High School, 1988-1989

Location	Verbal Mean	Math Mean
Total	427	476
Large City	417	467
Med.-Size City	429	476
Small City/Town	428	473
Suburban	443	494
Rural	419	461

Source: United States Department of Education. 1990. Digest of Educational Statistics Research and Improvement.

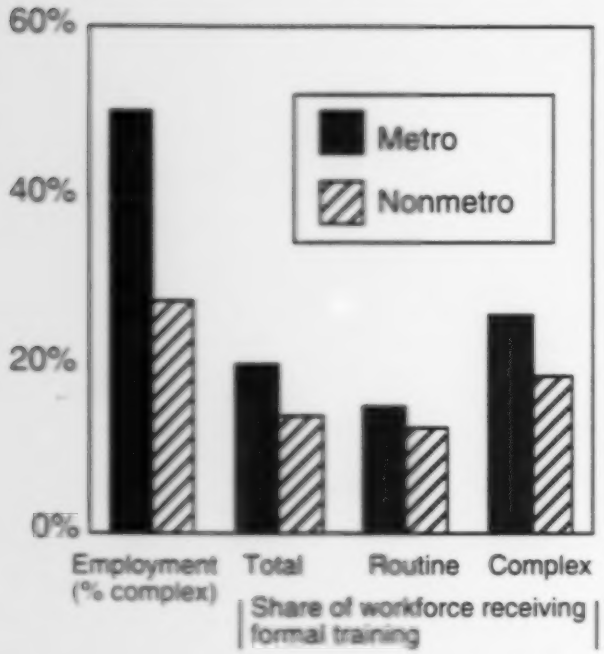

Figure 4: Formal Training Programs in manufacturing for wage and salary workers, 1991.

Source: Current Population Survey

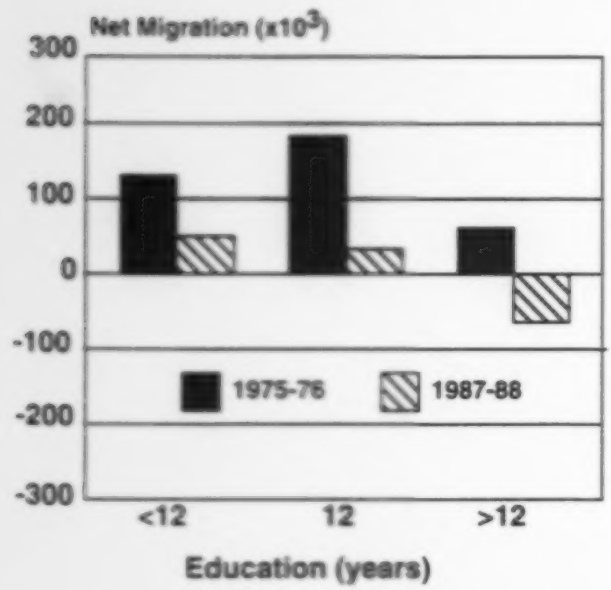

Figure 5: Nonmetro Net Migration by Education, 1975-76 and 1987-88 (reproduced from Lichter, McLaughlin, and Cornwall, 1995)

Source: 1976 and 1988 March CPS machine-readable files

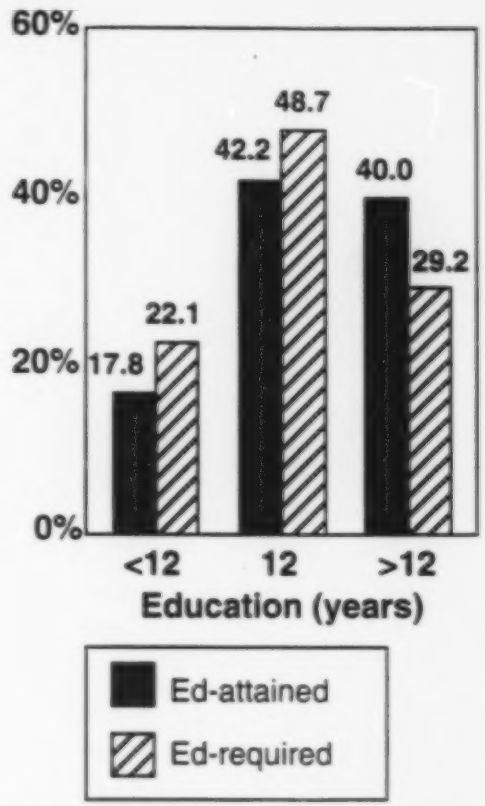

Figure 6: Amount of education attained and required for nonmtropolitan jobs.

Source: Economic Research Service, U.S.D.A.

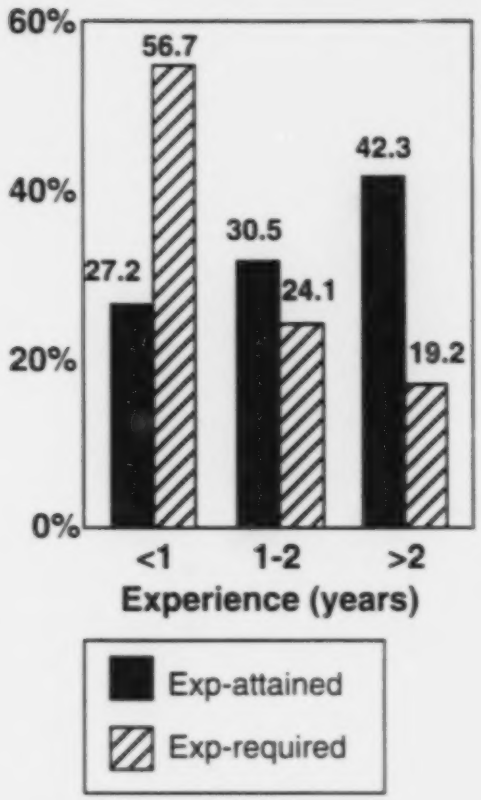

Figure 7: Amount of experience attained and required for nonmtropolitan jobs.

Source: Economic Research Service, U.S.D.A.

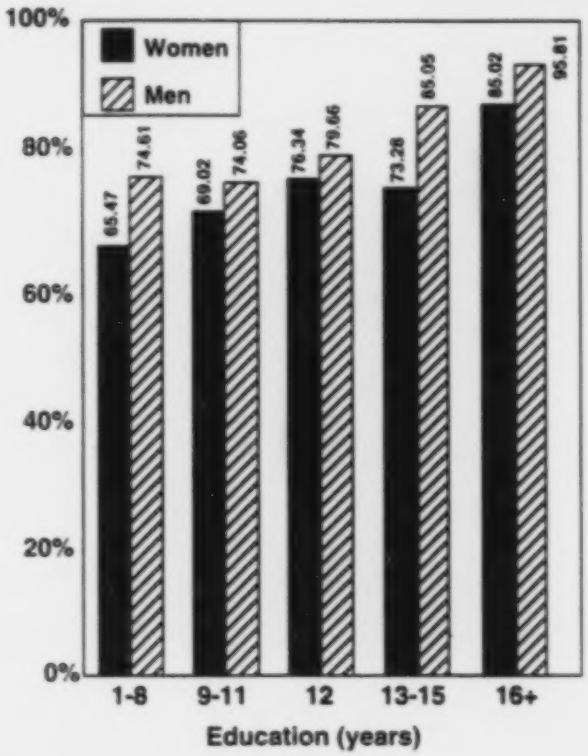

Figure 8: (Continued) Rates of Adequate Employment by Education in Major Industries in Nonmetro U.S. (from Findeis, 1994)

Source: Estimated from 1988 March Current Population Survey.

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WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

-- by Dr. Kenneth E. Martin

Kenneth E. Martin, senior research associate in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology serves as director of the Pennsylvania Office of Rural Health and associate director of the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development at The Pennsylvania State University. Dr. Martin focuses on planning, organization, and collaboration at all levels in the areas of community and economic development, health education, strategic planning, distance education, and rural development.

In developing the agenda for this workshop, we have used several ideas, themes, and works from various sources. In particular, we wanted to consider ways to rebuild communities and prevent poverty. We focused on the basic message of two important works, . . . Etzioni's "Spirit of Community" and . . .McKnight and Kretzmann's "Building Communities from the Inside Out." In order to rebuild communities in the face of today's poverty problems, Etzioni points out that we must draw on community institutions and community members. People in need should be able to turn first to their community and neighbors to find help. McKnight and Kretzmann lay out an effective strategy for finding and mobilizing community assets. These authors show how to help people in need to find the help in their own communities. The strategies discussed here help point out the services that each community has to offer.

Building Coalition and Community Capacity

As I reflect on the preparation completed for this workshop, I also look at what has occurred here during our meetings. What we prepared for has been completed, and we can now reflect on how effective this workshop has been.

While thinking back on the presentations that were made and the state team discussions that were carried out, I see the emergence of several common themes. Between the presentations and the individual team meetings, there are several common ideas that should be discussed; I would like to focus on two of these.

The first theme is that of coalition building that involves grass roots organizations and community institutions. The involvement of these entities is extremely important for developing and implementing successful initiatives that address poverty at the local level. Coalition building is necessary in order to provide successful ideas and proposals toward preventing poverty.

The second theme is that of building community capacity. In order to build community capacity, we should focus on strengthening community leadership and social infrastructure. This strengthening is necessary for communities that want to be proactive in creating pathways from poverty. We must have quality leadership and community structure in order to have an active, successful community.

Looking back on these two common themes, we see that they can help us to provide a framework on how to move forward. We've met and discussed ways that we can possibly create pathways from poverty. It is now our responsibility to put these ideas and themes into action. We must find ways to implement our ideas, and in order to do that we must venture back into our respective states and communities and work together to create a positive change.

In discussing coalition and capacity building, we find that there are some specific roles that state teams must consider. We, as the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development, also have roles that we must take on.

Roles and Responsibilities

You might ask, "What can we as state teams do at the state and community level?" I would like to help you clarify your role in creating pathways from poverty. Ideas, suggestions, and enthusiasm have been evident in our conference. But now we need to go back to our home states and use these ideas and suggestions, ideally keeping alive the excitement and interest that we've had here the past few days.

Coalition Building and State Teams

When looking at the relation between coalition building and state teams, we find that there are strategies we must use in order to create pathways from poverty in our own communities. We as state teams must continue thinking about other partners to engage back home, especially those partners that can contribute to building social capital at the community level. Find those contacts who can help you in communities across your state, and further develop your ideas on creating pathways from poverty. Find those people living in the heart of your communities who can tell you exactly what's going on. You will get extremely helpful feedback from those who are aware of poverty situations in their own area.

Another way you can take action is to think about how you can help communities to develop and build coalitions to address the many faces of rural poverty. Although most people are aware of problems in their own community, we must show them what's going on in rural areas everywhere. In showing them

this, we also must help people to create ways of facing the problem head-on. It is only in this fashion that we may begin to be successful in creating pathways from poverty.

When looking at the poverty situation in your state, begin to identify low income counties where there are people who really care about poverty prevention. Find those people who can contribute to and benefit from coalition building efforts. Your challenge here is to identify, engage, and energize communities in developing initiatives that strengthen and build on social capital.

It is possible to do all these things when dealing with coalition building. You as a state team can do this by leading, convening, inspiring, encouraging, and facilitating. Start your journey towards preventing poverty with enthusiasm. Realize it can be done.

Capacity Building and the Northeast Center

Now that we've looked at ways in which the state teams can help, we should look to see how the Northeast Center can help in this effort. What can we, as the Northeast Center, do to support state and local efforts in the northeast region?

The Northeast Center can contribute to the state team efforts by facilitating communication among state teams. In order to stay knowledgeable about all the efforts to create pathways from poverty, the center can keep the state teams in touch with one another, especially via ways such as the *Pathways from Poverty* newsletter produced by Michelle Decker and Gene Summers. By keeping the lines of communication open, we can keep the ideas and suggestions moving from state to state.

The Northeast Center also is planning to develop a community development initiative that will focus on capacity building. It will draw on our network to deliver training in community development, problem solving skills, and in short, give people the tools to act locally. If we can show others how to go about building community, we will benefit ourselves as well as the community.

As part of this initiative, the Northeast Center is developing a proposal to build community capacity in the Northeast. We have developed different ideas on ways to train our communities to work for positive results.

We envision a program for training others in community development. During this training, citizens will attend programs to learn strategies of developing community. The first week will be devoted to increasing participant understanding of the causes and problems of rural communities. Participants will find out about problems of communities in their area and **why** they are problems. The second week, participants will focus on the design, implementation, and management of community-based programs to address these problems. Here, they will learn what to do about the problems which they face.

Another way in which the Center is working towards educating others in community development is by linking students to the academic research community. By allowing these two groups to work together, much information will be generated specific to supporting local problem-solving activities. Ideas will be developed and tested, and more will be learned about creating pathways from poverty through the community.

The Northeast Center will share the activities, experiences, and results of individual community efforts with communities across the region. Successful ideas and programs will be shared with others, therefore spreading the success of the fight against poverty.

In closing, I would like to say that I believe these ideas about coalition and capacity building will help the Pathways from Poverty effort to be successful. The Northeast Center is going to move forward with the capacity building proposal. By linking it to this workshop and the state teams, we can be assured of its success.

We will be happy to work with state teams to develop proposals in our fight against poverty. The Center will review proposals and help identify potential. We will aid in finding resources for initiatives that propose to be successful. We feel assured that the state teams will use enthusiasm, ideas, excitement, and suggestions from this gathering to generate success in their own states. Thank you for your effort, your interest, and your attendance.

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3 - State Teams and Programs

The following section contains information on each of the Pathways from Poverty state teams for the Northeast Region and sixty-four programs that work to help alleviate the problems associated with poverty in the Northeast. The states are arranged alphabetically, with program information following a short summary of the state's Pathways team. The index lists all of the programs according to the three pathways laid out by the Rural Sociology Society's Task Force on Persistent Rural Poverty: Education and Human Capital; Family, Health, and Housing; and Work and Income.

We recognize that the list of programs is far from comprehensive. We hope, however, that the information leads to collaboration between programs of similar interest. Hopefully this list also will lead people in need to some of the resources that are ready to help them.

Connecticut 62
Delaware 65
Maine 69
Maryland 75
Massachusetts 77
New Hampshire 83
New Jersey 88
New York 89
Pennsylvania 106
Rhode Island 121
Vermont 122
West Virginia 132

CONNECTICUT

Pathways from Poverty Team

Team Vision

The *vision* of the Connecticut Pathways from Poverty Team is to facilitate comprehensive and holistic community-based planning processes that encourage active participation in developing healthy communities.

Team Mission

The *mission* of the Connecticut Pathways from Poverty Team is to enhance the quality of life and economic well-being of poorer Connecticut citizens by providing an entity that will gather, coordinate, and disseminate resource information necessary for community revitalization.

Accomplishments

Connecticut's team has been very active since the Pathways from Poverty conference, and has held several subcommittee meetings and state team meetings. The team has held brainstorming sessions; reviewed national, regional, and state demographics; networked with community neighborhood organizations, and participated in other research activities to develop and finalize a plan for working towards solving community-based problems in the state. This plan targets certain geographical areas in Connecticut and concentrates on the three Pathways from Poverty identified at the conference: Work and Income; Family, Health and Housing; and Education and Human Capital. Contact with cross-sections of service providers and users reveals a consistent message—access to timely resource information is needed to make informed choices and decisions. This will facilitate comprehensive and holistic community-based planning. On March 28, 1996, the team agreed to form the Community Resource Network.

This Network will become a collection of publicly available resource information to be disseminated using methods such as the Internet, periodicals, PBS and Cable TV, talk radio, door-to-door canvassing, and religious institutions. Many of the actions recommended by this plan will be implemented through collaborative methods between existing resources of federal, state, regional and local units of government and private and non-profit organizations throughout the state. Connecticut's state team will gather, coordinate, and share this collection of information so that community revitalization and the quality of life for the poor citizens of Connecticut may be improved.

The Connecticut State Team hosted a conference at Trinity College on May 24, 1996, in conjunction with federal, state, and local government, community groups, businesses, and non-profit organizations to obtain more public input into their process of facing distress areas in the state. The team also sponsored a statewide community leadership conference for community residents to discuss issues pertaining to improving Connecticut's neighborhoods.

Follow-Up Seed Grant Funds

The Connecticut Pathways from Poverty State Team requested funds from the Northeast Center. It has planned to use these funds to host the Trinity College conference as well as the statewide community conference. The team requested $800 for various costs of the Trinity College conference. It also requested $500 for scholarships for low income residents to attend the statewide community leadership conference.

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LEADERSHIP, EDUCATION, AND ATHLETICS IN PARTNERSHIP

Where

Based in New Haven with program offices in Hartford and New London, CT

Mission

LEAP helps 7 to 14 year old children from high poverty neighborhoods to develop the academic skills and self-esteem necessary to succeed in school and grow up to be productive citizens. The Partnership also strives to provide college and high school students with comprehensive training and powerful life-changing experiences which will develop their leadership skills, help them refine career goals, and prepare them to lead the search for solutions to the social problems facing both rural and urban America.

How

Participants in the LEAP program come from low income communities. The program has served over seven hundred children from seven neighborhoods in Hartford, New Haven, and New London. Over 170 college and public high school students have acted as counselors. Local public schools, housing authorities, colleges and universities, and over 70 collaborating agencies have also taken part in the program.

Operated by a young adult staff, LEAP pairs a college student (senior counselor) and a high school student (junior counselor) to work with a group of eight children of similar age and the same gender. During the summer, college counselors move into donated public housing units in the neighborhoods where their children live.

The reading-based curriculum runs year-round and has been developed by the staff in consultation with local and national education and social development experts. LEAP utilizes classroom space donated by the local public schools. The local programs are supplemented by an experiential learning component that includes creative arts, science exploration, athletics, outdoor camping, and week-long trips to cities such as Atlanta, Boston, Philadelphia, Toronto, and Washington, DC; these trips help expand each child's view of the world and the role that they can play in it.

Accomplishments

Founded in 1992, LEAP has been responsible for lasting change in children's lives as over 85% of the children return to the program each year, and 100% of the African-American and Latino junior counselors graduate from high school compared to a state-wide average of less than 67%. The training and curriculum staff have provided counsel to Children's Defense Fund programs, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, the US Corp. on National and Community Service, and other youth service providers. LEAP also is one of the largest AmeriCorps programs in the country. LEAP has been recognized nationally with many awards, and has received grants to expand the program.

Funding

The LEAP program receives funds from three main sources: federal and state grants, various foundations, and individual donors.

Future Plans

The LEAP program was awarded a grant in 1994 by the State of Connecticut to expand their services to two new cities. They also have been given a grant by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration of the US Department of Commerce to build a National Youth Center Network. According to Staff Manager Deidre Bailey, the program also hopes to open a new Computer Learning Center in the New London program (Computer Learning Centers are already open in the Hartford and New Haven programs).

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THE NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION ZONE

Where

A law in the state of Connecticut. The Revitalization Zone effort, known as Public Act 340-95, is working now in seven communities in Connecticut.

Mission

The mission of the Neighborhood Revitalization Zone (NRZ) effort is to: "Create a partnership between local communities, municipal, state, and Federal governments, and lenders to formulate an action plan. The plan will be a comprehensive strategy to use properties as a tool for economic development and revitalization of neighborhoods." The NRZ effort works to empower people to take control of their lives and environment in the tradition of participatory citizenship.

How

On July 11, 1994, Connecticut's Neighborhood Revitalization Task Force convened to address the problem of foreclosed and abandoned property across the state in a comprehensive, innovative, and socially productive way. Topics of discussion included: building costs, property security, employee skills, management skills, and capital.

The Task Force, spearheaded by US Senator Christopher Dodd and staffed by the Connecticut Institute of Municipal Studies, included major participants such as the Federal Deposit and Insurance Corporation, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority, and Connecticut's Office of Policy and Management.

The Neighborhood Revitalization Zone effort is working to create new solutions for the problems of economic decline, unemployment, rising poverty rates, and declining property value. The NRZ effort hopes to help communities build economic and social status by helping state and local governments find ways to use foreclosed properties and by rebuilding the abandoned neighborhoods.

The NRZ Task Force encourages local communities to establish Neighborhood Revitalization Zones in order to create and sustain safe, clean, and caring communities and environments. These Zones will have neighborhood planning committees made up of neighborhood residents, businesses, government and financial institutions, and other designated community organizations, that will be responsible for developing a plan to revitalize their neighborhood. Each committee will examine economic development, public safety, health, transportation, disposition of property, home ownership, recreation, education, and training. Foreclosed and abandoned property will be used as community assets. The NRZ effort hopes that by establishing these committees, each community will experience revitalization and self-sufficiency.

The NRZ effort faces barriers daily in the effort to help communities across the state. Longstanding prejudices about the inner city, its problems, and possible solutions are still held by the government, residents, and the general public.

The NRZ effort also faces a lack of commitment by government officials to change legislation and adopt the Neighborhood Revitalization plan. Even while facing challenges such as these, the present success of the program encourages communities to press on.

Accomplishments

The Neighborhood Revitalization Effort, still in its infancy, has already seen seven communities adopt its program. The interest, as well as the number of participants in the Effort is certainly growing. Suffering communities find success in the program, and Program Director Elizabeth Brown predicts further success and expansion.

Funding

Various grants were received from groups and foundations for NRZ activities, and support has been received to expand the program. When educating communities about rebuilding their area, emphasis is placed on using existing funds as opposed to depending on the government for help.

Future Plans

The CT Institute of Municipal Studies will continue working with the NRZ program in the future by supporting efforts to implement the principles proposed in the NRZ legislation.

Community leaders across the state have the opportunity to attend public hearings and workshops, which will only help in expanding the program. The NRZ effort hopes to expand its program to other communities across the state, encouraging success for all of Connecticut.

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DELAWARE

Pathways from Poverty Team

Team Vision

The vision of the Delaware Pathways from Poverty Team is to break the cycle of poverty in Delaware, and for future generations of emotionally, mentally, physically, and socially healthy, well educated citizens to live productive lives.

Team Mission

The Delaware Team has held numerous meetings in Kent and Sussex Counties, the principal areas of rural poverty in the state. These meetings have allowed the team to observe the extent of poverty. Additionally, meetings have tapped the knowledgeable resources within the state to further inform team members of the status of poverty and its contributing factors. The goal has been to educate ourselves in the complexities of the problem before implementing efforts to change the problem.

Ms. Tina Savage and Ms. Leila Riddick, both graduate students from the Delaware State University Department of Social Work, served as administrative support personnel to the Delaware Pathways Team during the 1995-96 and 1996-97 academic years respectively. Since its initial inception, the team has experienced several changes in membership. Some individuals have changed positions and no longer serve on the team, while others have joined the team's effort.

Accomplishments

The Delaware Pathways Team plans to sponsor a state-wide workshop on poverty during 1997. The goal will be to bring together individuals from different constituencies that impact on poverty within the state. This will include citizens living in poverty; government officials; community, civic, and church leaders; and business representatives. Through a focus group approach, the workshop will develop short term and long range strategies for identifying and attacking the issues related to poverty within the state of Delaware.

Follow-Up Seed Grant Funds

The Delaware Pathways from Poverty Team requested $1300 in funds from the Northeast Center. These funds will be used as seed money for the state workshop on poverty.

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EMERGENCY HOME REPAIR PROJECT

Where

The program helps families in rural areas concentrated primarily in central and southern Delaware (Kent and Sussex Counties).

Mission

Sponsored by the First State Resource and Development Council, Inc., this volunteer-driven program works to eliminate severely substandard housing conditions from the homes of low-income homeowners, thereby allowing the family to remain in the home until further housing rehabilitation programs (most of which have very long waiting lists) arrive. The program targets homeowners whose income is 50% or less of the median income according to HUD guidelines, and who live in seriously substandard homes with a housing condition that poses an immediate health or safety hazard.

How

The idea for the program began when a social worker noticed that waiting lists for community block grants for housing rehabilitation programs were growing longer each year. Working with his church group, the social worker managed to raise enough money and enlist enough volunteers to get the program started. The program was then adopted by First State Resources and Development Council, Inc., and has been rapidly expanding ever since.

Volunteer skilled laborers install safe heating systems, upgrade indoor plumbing, and repair serious electrical hazards. They also fix and/or replace deteriorated structural holes in the roof and walls, and missing windows.

A volunteer, county field coordinator conducts an eligibility interview with the applicant homeowner and assesses the hazardous condition that needs to be eliminated. If the applicant is approved by a county oversight committee, the field coordinator procures the materials needed, coordinates their delivery to the site, and enlists skilled volunteers to assist the homeowner in making the needed repairs. Vendors and licensed contractors are used when conditions require code work to be done. One of the aims of the project is to get the homeowners actively involved with the repair work, whether it be contributing their labor or simply providing the volunteers with coffee.

Accomplishments

The-four-year-old program has grown from helping four families during its first year to more than 170 this past year.

Funding

Materials are purchased through donations from individuals, local banks and organizations, and the Delaware State Housing Authority. The program's sponsor, First State Resources and Development Council, Inc., a non-profit rural development corporation, works in partnership with a variety of public and private organizations to promote and facilitate community development.

Future Plans

Obtaining more volunteers is key to the overall goal of maintaining the program's independence as a private, non-profit community organization.

"*We're not aiming to be a state agency,*" Christine Stillson said. "*We're based on people becoming involved in their communities.*"

Toward that end, the program is focused on recruiting additional people. Habitat for Humanity, VISTA, and Americorps are among the organizations the program is working with to get more volunteers. Additionally, a program is being developed that will involve first-time juvenile offenders, who will be given the opportunity to gain on-the-job skills training working for the program.

The program also depends on skilled volunteers, such as plumbers, carpenters, and electricians. Because there is a limited number of such volunteers, and demand for the program's services is growing each year, a policy of recruiting from church groups, men's fellowship programs, and other groups is being pursued. This will allow the program to recruit more people at one time, said program manager Christine Stillson.

Testimony

A 73-year-old woman with health problems is among the homeowners who've benefited from the program. The volunteers repaired her mobile home, which was in serious disrepair, including a ceiling that was near collapse.

"*We help a lot of single parent families and low-income, elderly people,*" said Stillson . *It's gotten to the point where we now have a waiting list of about 250 people, although when the problems involve immediate health hazards, especially to young children, we try to respond within twenty-four hours.*"

"*We've grown incredibly in the past few years. The number of families we serve goes up every year. We're unique because we rely on community members to donate their time and services, rather than paid personnel.*"

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The Minority and Small Business Entrepreneurial Center

Where

The Minority and Small Business Entrepreneurial Center, while open to everyone in Delaware, specifically targets low-income, minority residents of Kent and Sussex Counties, the state's two most poverty-ridden, rural counties.

Mission

For individuals wishing to improve their economic status, it's vitally important that their communities have a healthy economic base upon which its members can build their own ladders from poverty to the American Dream. A vital component of any economic base is small business—indeed, small businesses generate the majority of jobs in most states. However, many community members have been excluded from the economic mainstream—whether because of discrimination, limited access to education, or a combination of factors—and haven't had the opportunity to participate in economic activities such as small business ownership. The Minority and Small Business Entrepreneurial Center of Delaware State University is attempting to change that.

"We focus on the people who have historically provided most of the cheap, unskilled labor in this state," said program director Clayton Hammond. *"Economic trends dictate that those types of low-skill jobs won't exist in the future. We want to provide these people with some options."*

How

The program plays a multi-faceted role in assisting the development of small businesses. It works to address the numerous barriers that impede the enterprise development process—such as poor job skills, poor time management, lack of business training, and lack of access to financial resources—by conducting training programs, initiating partnerships with the public and private sectors, and operating talent banks and micro enterprise development programs. Above all, the program works to ensure that participants are equipped with necessary life skills, without which the rest of the program would be useless.

"No amount of business training will work if a person doesn't understand time management," said Hammond.

Through a sixteen week course, participants are taught business principles and lifestyle skills such as personal money management. The teachers are usually successful entrepreneurs rather than professors from the university.

"Professors bring an academic approach to business," Hammond said, *"while we're interested in a more practical, experience-driven approach an entrepreneur can bring to the course."*

The focal point of the course is the comprehensive business plan that each participant is expected to develop during the sixteen-week course. The program advises participants on their business plans and directs them to funding resources, which include loans that local banks make available to graduates of the course. The program has applied for a $5 million loan from the USDA's Rural Development Association that will enable it to make loans of up to $25,000 to participants.

Accomplishments

Among the program's other projects are a community-based entrepreneurial training course targeted for youth and young adults, and a minority business directory for Kent and Sussex Counties that can be used by the public and private sectors. Begun two years ago, this program has since graduated 110 participants, many of whom are minorities who have gone on to achieve prominence in the local business community. One African-American graduate of the program now owns a Dover restaurant employing ten people; this is just an example of what one of the graduates of the program has accomplished.

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THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON AGRICULTURAL LIFE AND LABOR RESEARCH FUND, INC.

Where

With headquarters in Dover, Delaware, the National Council on Agricultural Life and Labor Research Fund, Inc. (NCALL) also has two additional offices in Sussex and New Castle counties, DE in order to serve the mid-Atlantic and Northeast regions

Mission

The mission of NCALL is "to empower, enhance, and build the capacity of low income, rural people and organizations to improve housing, working, and living conditions."

How

NCALL began as a legislative advocate for better living and working conditions for migrant and seasonal farm workers. The Council has worked since then to offer meaningful housing opportunities to rural families and farm workers.

NCALL believes simply that everyone deserves a home. NCALL provides rural and farm worker housing, technical assistance and training, and has gained experience in financing programs offered by the Farmers Home Administration, Department of Housing and Urban Development, and many state administered housing initiatives.

NCALL provides training and direct aid to non-profit sponsors that develop, own, and manage housing for low income families and farm workers in Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia.

The Council also offers Homeownership Counseling to low and moderate income Delaware families applying for various mortgage loans. Participants are given assistance with every step from credit evaluation to searching for a home, to home ownership responsibilities.

Through the Self-Help Housing Technical Assistance program, NCALL provides program assistance, fiscal aid, and management training to potential and existing self-help housing grantees in twenty-one states in the US. Participants are offered services in application training, program planning, construction scheduling, grants management, and staff training.

NCALL also helps the homeless in Kent County, Delaware, to locate permanent, affordable housing. Families with children are shown alternate housing solutions and are given credit counseling and budget training.

Accomplishments

Since its beginning, NCALL has taken the lead in creating better housing for rural families and farm workers. NCALL has helped 1,300 families achieve the dream of home ownership and an additional 3,000 families construct or rehabilitate their homes through training support.

Between October of 1994 and September of 1995, 89 homes and apartments were created through the Rural and Farm Labor Housing project. The leaders of this project plan on constructing ninety-four additional apartments in the near future.

Through the Homeownership Counseling program, NCALL has helped to educate, encourage, and empower families to get through the process of purchasing their first home. In the past twelve months, there were 973 inquiries into the program, 561 new clients, and 264 families achieving home ownership. Thirty-nine percent of these families were female-headed households, and 67% of the households had incomes below 80% of the county median income.

Funding

NCALL receives funding from many grants, contributions, and contracts. The State of Delaware, various banks, foundations, and trust companies also support NCALL.

Future Plans

NCALL is constantly working to help low income families and farm workers and is always planning future housing projects. Each program offered by NCALL looks toward the future as a promise to families needing housing. Various housing projects are currently in the planning, application, or approval stages, and NCALL looks forward to providing housing opportunities for those families that need it most.

Testimony

"I was so relieved to find a service such as NCALL," says Homeownership Counseling participant Sheri Long. *"With their help, I was able to maintain my budget and become better prepared to be a homeowner."*

"When I think about where we were before in a little two-bedroom trailer, this is like a mansion. I'm so thankful to NCALL for helping me get my home," shares Lisa Mann. Ms. Mann received her new home with help from the Rural Delaware Homeownership Initiative program offered by NCALL.

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MAINE

Pathways from Poverty Team

Team Vision

The *vision* of the Maine Pathways from Poverty Team is to serve as a catalyst for driving the shadow of rural poverty from the state of Maine and to act as a model for addressing persistent poverty everywhere.

Accomplishments

The Maine Pathways from Poverty Team has been active since the conference last September. It has met several times in the past few months, and has developed new ideas for the prevention of poverty in Maine. One of the problems recognized by the team is that of computer illiteracy. The team has approached this problem with an exciting new solution called the "Electronic Grange" program. This program, created by team member Abe Kreworuka, is working to make electronic information and computers more available to the poor in Maine's rural communities. The program is active presently, and uses discarded computer systems from various sources to educate the rural poor in Maine. Volunteers from various organizations such as Literacy Volunteers of America give their time and provide computer skills to instruct rural residents. This service is free to the public, and is currently active in one rural town in Maine. The goal of the team is to create more programs in two additional locations. The "Electronic Grange" program has been approved for funding by the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development.

The Maine Pathways from Poverty state team also has an electronic bulletin board available to the public, so that anyone may post questions, requests, or information for the members of the team.

Follow-Up Seed Grant Funds

The Maine Pathways from Poverty Team requested $1,300 in funds from the Northeast Center. The money will go towards the implementation of the "Electronic Grange" program, the team's literacy program targeted at rural Maine.

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COASTAL ENTERPRISES, INC.

Where

State of Maine, central office in Wiscasset, Maine

Mission

Coastal Enterprises, Inc. (CEI) is a private, non-profit community development corporation that directs economic and human resources in Maine to help people and communities, particularly those with low incomes, reach an adequate and equitable standard of living, working, and learning.

How

CEI started out in 1977 as a project devoted to improving the economic prospects of Maine's fishermen and coastal communities. For CEI's first five years, its investments and assistance went towards fisheries and other natural resource industries. CEI continues to work with the fishing industry today, but has diversified into many other sectors of the economy. Its key roles are providing both debt and equity financing and technical assistance to small businesses and micro businesses, developing affordable housing, and providing opportunities for people with low-incomes to access jobs and housing.

CEI has become known for its sector approach to development. It has launched various natural resource industry projects over the years, including family farming and aquaculture, in addition to fisheries. In more recent years, it has developed sector strategies in small scale manufacturing, child care, environmental studies, and assisted living.

CEI also is known for helping people with low incomes or people on public assistance to find jobs in companies that it finances. CEI screens these companies according to the quality of jobs provided, and whether a portion of those jobs is suitable for low-income applicants. Companies sign an Employment Training Agreement stating their willingness to use CEI as a first source for filling targeted jobs. CEI then acts as a broker with the companies and the employment training and social service system to place people into the jobs and access additional training resources for the companies.

Other specialized financing and technical assistance programs include the Women's Business Project, which provides training, technical assistance, and access to credit for new and existing women business owners; Micro Net, a statewide support system for micro-enterprises; and Green Fund, which assists environmental industries and small businesses moving towards pollution prevention production methods. A telecommunications technical assistance project is also offered to help small businesses use telecommunications for business competitiveness.

Another aspect of CEI's work is research and policy development to study new development areas and create a favorable policy environment for its programs to prosper. Some recent research projects have covered environmental industries, assisted living, manufacturing firms with defense related markets, linking job creation to people on public assistance, and an evaluation of CEI's social and economic impacts.

Accomplishments

Since 1979, CEI has provided financing and technical assistance in development of small businesses, social services, and affordable housing. CEI has financed over six hundred projects with $30 million in public and private capital.

CEI has provided counseling to over eight thousand small businesses and has created or sustained some sixty-five hundred jobs. It has experienced rapid growth in recent years, and has established a professional and support staff of forty.

Funding

CEI works in partnership with diverse public and private organizations throughout the country. CEI supporters provide grants, loans, and investments for its projects. CEI collects funds from private foundations, national Protestant and Catholic Church organizations, state and federal government sources, and other national and state associations.

Future Plans

The staff and board are in the process of developing a five-year strategic direction for the organization, and a board committee was created to encourage expansion of its membership. CEI is also in the process of developing a business plan to look at the potential for launching CEI Development Services, a technical assistance advisory service to help others in the US and abroad in their community economic development efforts. CEI is constantly working on plans for the future, and looks toward helping the communities of Maine as well as the world.

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Washington County Clam Flats Revitalization Project

Where

Washington County, Maine

Mission

The economy of Washington County, Maine, is closely linked to the health of its natural resources. Clean water and wise resource management is important to the county's once highly productive soft shell clam industry. Pollution, over-harvesting, and neglect have reduced the importance of this industry as a source of local employment. Within the last decade, the clam harvest in eastern Maine has declined 84%. This has resulted in a loss of over 1,800 jobs, causing severe economic hardship in many coastal communities.

Working closely with local communities, University of Maine Cooperative Extension has worked to revitalize and replenish the clam flats through a regional approach to clam management and revitalization.

How

University of Maine Cooperative Extension targeted three coastal communities with a combined area of over 4000 acres of once-productive clam flats for clam management and revitalization assistance. A Downeast Regional Shellfish Committee was formed by representatives from the three communities. Working closely with extension representatives, the committee has involved local and state officials from several agencies in identifying sound management and conservation strategies. The committee also has utilized an on-going water-monitoring project comprised of volunteers and community educators who are working to identify the sources of pollution that have closed most of the region's clam flats.

The committee has met with officials of the state Department of Marine Resources to discuss and clarify current regulations and the department's role and responsibility for assisting local communities. Open forums and informational meetings to discuss soft shell clam biology and management, and the implications of water quality monitoring for the clam industry have been sponsored by the committee as well.

The program is a result of collaborative efforts among a number of local and state regulatory agencies, including the Beals Island Regional Shellfish Hatchery, the State Planning Office, the University of Maine at Machias, local Americorps volunteers, and numerous volunteers throughout the region.

Accomplishments

For decades, the coastal communities of Harrington, Addison, and Jonesport were in constant competition over the area's marine resources. The decline of the clam industry and the resulting economic hardship, however, has brought the three communities together to accomplish some significant results. The Downeast Regional Shellfish Group reports that the opening of 350 acres of previously closed clam flats to shellfish harvesting has returned over $500,000 to the local economy. In addition, over 1 million juvenile soft shell clams were seeded in a conservation area by community volunteers and harvesters for later transplanting into less productive clam flat areas. This effort has spurred other communities to consider similar programs and has heightened interest in sustained management of Washington County's clam resources.

The program has been a catalyst for community involvement as well; in interviews with Extension staff, community leaders, elected officials, and clam fisherman, they repeatedly said that this was the first time anyone had involved them in the process of trying to solve their own problems.

Funding

Funds from the University of Maine Cooperative Extension Service and Washington County board of commissioners are combined with funds from the three towns to sponsor projects and studies in support of the revitalization project. The clam reseeding project, for example, was funded by one of the towns.

Future Plans

Extension personnel and committee members hope to expand the project to include more coastal communities, allowing for a regional approach to clam management.

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HEIFER PROJECT INTERNATIONAL

Where

Headquartered in Little Rock, AR, the Heifer Project currently sponsors more than 130 projects in thirty-two countries and the U.S. Within the U.S., the Project maintains eight regional offices, including one in the Northeast.

Mission

The Heifer Project's overall goals include a future in which rural families have achieved a satisfying quality of life, economically viable farms and ranches, fertile and productive soils, and healthy rural communities. The Heifer Project provides funds for livestock, training, and technical support so that limited-resource rural families and communities can help themselves by producing food, fiber, and income through animal agriculture. An essential part of the Project's philosophy is the understanding that each person who receives an animal will "pass on the gift" by passing on one or more female offspring from each animal received to another person in need. Thus, the gift keeps on growing, and each recipient becomes in turn, a donor.

How

The Heifer Project works in partnership with organized farmer groups and a variety of organizations and programs. The process begins as families and individuals join together to discuss their needs. Once they agree on solutions, they utilize the assistance of a field representative to create a plan and submit a proposal to the regional office. The livestock-related activities they decide to do for the benefit of their own community become the basis for their partnership with Heifer Project International. Once approved for support, these livestock-related activities are called a "project." The local group or organization is called a "project holder." The project holder manages the funds, manages the pass-on requirements and the daily activities of the project, and is accountable to Heifer Project International through record-keeping and semi-annual reports.

Although most groups include members from all income levels, only those members whose incomes meet federal and local financial guidelines are eligible to receive livestock through Heifer Project International. Cows aren't the only livestock the organization supplies; rabbits, swine, draft horses, fish, honey bees, and mules also are provided to groups who request them, in addition to other support such as seeds, veterinary supplies, training, and other material and technical support. Training and technical support includes workshops in the following: animal husbandry, forage management, marketing, land and resource stewardship, planning and record-keeping, and alternative agricultural enterprises.

Accomplisments

Since its inception in 1944 with a shipment of eighteen heifers to Puerto Rico, the Project has provided over 90,000 animals, 1,350,000 fowl, 5,000 beehives, and 1,300,000 fish fingerlings to impoverished families throughout the world. Within rural, low-income areas of New York and Maine, the Project is sponsoring eight projects that are helping families increase their incomes and reduce their shopping expenses by raising livestock and growing vegetables.

Funding

Heifer Project International relies on individual donations and grants from both domestic and international sources. Donations to the group have been down for the past few years, and the Project is seeking additional funding sources. One solution involves individual projects conducting more of their own fundraising—both for their own needs and those of other projects. Successful examples include a project in Aroostook County, Maine, which is raising money for a project in Appalachia.

Future Plans

"Teaching marketing skills to farmers will be a major focus of Heifer Project International's future plans," said Anne Bossi, Field Representative. *"We've always provided livestock and related training, but the need for marketing skills is becoming obvious. Farmers tend to lack them."*

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RURAL READERS CONNECTION

Where

Franklin County, Maine.

Mission

Administered through the Franklin County Adult Basic Education program, Rural Readers Connection simultaneously teaches English and computer literacy.

How

A model of cost effectiveness, the program has used one laptop computer with a modem connection to teach English and computer literacy to more than fifty people. Instruction takes place either in a participant's home, or, if the participant lacks a telephone, in a mutually convenient place. Training is tailored for each individual; participants work on creating a portfolio of work that reflects their own situation or problems. For example, some participants have used the computer to write letters to elected officials about issues that concern them; thus improving their English and computer literacy skills and becoming more involved in the democratic process.

The computer's modem connection allows the participants to learn about the Internet and e-mail.

Accomplishments

In addition to teaching more than fifty people how to read, write, and use a computer, Rural Readers Connection has broadened their awareness of the outside world and taught them how they might use the skills they've learned to better their own situations.

One example is that of a low-income, elderly woman who lived in a trailer with no running water. After a well was finally installed on her property, the woman found it didn't work properly. Instead of contacting the state government or the contractor who had installed the well, she continued to physically haul water from a nearby spring because she *"didn't want to be any trouble."*

"After we gave her instruction on the computer, she was much more willing to send a letter to the contractor because she saw how nice it looked when it was printed off from the computer," said Abe Kreworuka, program facilitator and instructor. The woman's well has since been fixed.

Participants have gone "on-line" as well, learning to access the Internet, the University of Maine Library System, and e-mail. The participants learn the value of these resources by using them to obtain information about issues that are important to them.

"One participant who had cancer used the Internet to learn more about the disease and available treatments," said Kreworuka.

Others make contributions of their own to the Internet; the elderly woman with the well, for example, put historical information about the area on-line.

Funding

The program received initial funding through a $3,000 Adult Education Grant. Additional funding sources are currently being researched.

Future Plans

"On-line marketing via the Internet could provide area residents with a way to boost their incomes," Kreworuka said. *"Lots of people in this area have skills and crafts that could be marketed over the World Wide Web. I know a guy who can make all kinds of quality products out of birch bark, such as toys and picture frames. He's good at teaching other people how to make things out of birch bark too. He'd benefit a lot if he were able to market his products over the Web."*

Toward this end, Kreworuka hopes to convince legislators and computer manufacturers to support the program and help it expand.

"Politicians need to realize that teaching people in isolated rural communities how to use the Internet is a great way to help them to help themselves," Kreworuka said. *"Otherwise, they'll continue to suffer from informational poverty, which is as bad as economic poverty."*

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WOMEN'S BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Where
Portland, Maine

Mission
The Women's Business Development Corporation is a non-profit membership organization dedicated to helping women (especially low-income women in rural areas in Maine), develop the skills needed to establish a successful business.

How
The Working Capital Program serves women who have no access to regular credit sources and who have had bad or no credit histories in the past. Through the program, women and men are able to borrow money, get extensive business training, and develop a support network of other group members. In the two years since the program was established, nineteen loan groups have been formed. Since it began two years ago, the program has a 100% pay back rate and has loaned out $36,000 in micro-loans starting at $500 and going to $5,000.

The Women's Mentoring Program was developed six years ago by the Women's Business Development Corporation and is now an internationally recognized program that serves as a concrete stepping stone to a new level of economic independence through business training and ownership. The program serves approximately 60 to 100 women per year by providing support and training to business owners who have not reached the self-sustaining level. By working with the business owner, the program evaluates needs and develops a plan for technical assistance, financing, and skills development. Additionally, the program matches the business owner with a "mentor," an experienced woman business owner who can act as a sounding board and an informal teacher willing to share her expertise.

Accomplishments
Among the successful programs administered by the organization are the Working Capital Program and the Women's Mentoring Program. These programs provide financing, support, and training to women just getting started in small business ownership.

Among the Working Capital Program's success stories is that of a couple who, in the midst of starting up their business, found they were too low-income to qualify for a business or personal loan. They joined one of the nineteen loan groups and asked the members how they could manage their business more effectively. The group pitched in with forms, advice on inexpensive business cards, information, referrals, and they even purchased products from one another. After eight months in the group, the couple successfully applied for a loan, which they used for a business phone, more stock, and a new sign. They project a 100% increase in business this year, and the wife is enrolled in the Women's Mentoring Program, where she will receive intensive training in marketing and bookkeeping.

Funding
The program receives funds from the Ford Foundation and the Ms. Foundation. Membership fees and individual donations provide the remainder of the organization's funding. No state or federal funds are used.

Testimony
Among the successful participants of the program is "Sue," a single mother formerly dependent on Aid to Families with Dependent Children. Sue went through the Women's Mentoring Program, learning the business skills that she needed to be successful as well as working with her mentor on a weekly basis. After doing appropriate marketing research and discovering that her town had a large diabetic population, she opened a sugar-free candy shop. After two years she has a successful, self-supporting business and is off of all state assistance.

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MARYLAND

Pathways from Poverty Team

Accomplishments

The Maryland Pathways from Poverty Team had been working with the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development and the Governor's Office on Children and Youth to put together a statewide conference on "Small Business and Entrepreneurial Opportunities in the 21st Century." This has unfortunately been put on hold by some of the participants due to factors out of the control of the Pathways from Poverty team. The team is hoping to be able to hold the conference in the near future.

Future Plans

The FORVM for Rural Maryland, acting on behalf of the Pathways from Poverty team, is planning a series of training sessions for non-profit organizations to increase their capability to provide services. A pilot program is currently being funded by the Appalachian Regional Commission in three western Maryland counties. It is the intent of the Team to expand this program to other rural areas in Maryland.

Follow-Up Seed Grant Funds

The Maryland Pathways from Poverty Team requested $2,300 from the Northeast Center in partial support of the development of an activity meeting between community action agencies within the state. The meeting, "The Maryland Summit on Economic Empowerment," (M$EE) will offer localized training to individuals seeking to engage in microenterprise, etc., perhaps in the context of regional-sized meetings. The following topics will be discussed at this meeting: entrepreneurial skills, microenterprise, transportation-related issues, skill development, child care strategies, and other issues related to operating small businesses.

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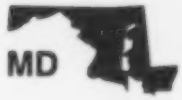
THE ENTERPRISE FOUNDATION



Where

Working across the country, The Enterprise Foundation is based in Columbia, Maryland, and has local offices in Georgia, Ohio, Texas, Colorado, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, New Mexico, and Maryland.

Mission

The mission of The Enterprise Foundation is to see that all low-income people in the United States have the opportunity for fit and affordable housing, and the chance to move up and out of poverty.

How

The Enterprise Foundation is a national, non-profit housing and community development organization launched in 1982 by Jim and Patty Rouse. The Foundation assists local, non-profit organizations and state and local governments in developing affordable housing and community services.

The Foundation provides hands-on experience, training, assistance, and valuable information to non-profit organizations in their network around the country. The Foundation also helps to create and preserve quality housing and services through construction corporations, neighborhood transformation centers, and other housing committees.

The Enterprise Foundation is spreading the message that they can help troubled communities through partnerships with their own local residents, church and civic groups, community organizations, government, non-profit developers, and private businesses. The Foundation also offers a wide selection of short term loans, permanent loans and grants, and provides technical assistance and training in affordable housing and community services.

The Foundation is also working to show that positive community change is possible. They provide technical and financial assistance to each of their fifteen Concentration Cities across the country. Through Enterprise OnLine, an electronic database of affordable housing and community development resources, any Enterprise organization across the country can receive valuable information as well as share experiences.

The Foundation has found valuable ways to communicate and advocate what works to communities in need. Through publications, speeches, training, and constant contact with elected officials and the media, The Foundation publicizes positive and inspiring examples of what does work and even takes real life experiences to Capitol Hill to show Representatives and Senators examples of programs that change people's lives. The Foundation trains local groups in public relations and advocacy, and honors groups and individuals that bring about positive change against all odds. Their stories of success are used to inspire others.

Accomplishments

The Foundation has provided technical assistance and training to a network of more than 550 organizations in more than 150 locations. To date, The Enterprise Foundation has helped develop 61,000 new and renovated homes by raising and committing more than $1.7 billion in loans, grants, and equity investments.

In 1995, The Foundation committed $5 million in grants to 125 non-profit organizations and more than $9.4 million in loans to support the development of around 3,600 affordable housing units.

Through its training sessions and workshops, 3,275 participants were educated in the fight for creating affordable housing. Through fifteen neighborhood-based non-profit employment centers in eleven cities, the Enterprise Jobs Network has helped place more than 26,000 people in jobs since its start in 1986.

A resident-led partnership with Sandtown-Winchester, a neighborhood of Baltimore, has proved to be a comprehensive and successful effort in community improvement and involvement.

Funding

Each year, The Foundation receives funds and contributions from hundreds of foundations, trusts, banks, private, and public donors. It is obvious that many people believe in the Foundation's efforts to provide livable housing for the poor, and in the effort to help the poor in our country help themselves.

Future Plans

Over the next five years, The Foundation plans to broaden its assistance and increase the size of its network by 50 percent to 750 non-profit organizations. According to Chairman and CEO F. Barton Harvey III, The Foundation plans to improve their telecommunications and computer technology to help improve information exchange. The Foundation also plans to double both its amount of loans, grants, and equity investments, and the number of decent, affordable homes it has helped provide.

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MASSACHUSETTS

Pathways from Poverty Team

Team Mission

The *mission* of the Massachusetts Pathways from Poverty Team is to enhance the ability of local communities to discover their own strengths, identify challenges, and work together to build and manage their own solutions as they create pathways from poverty.

Accomplishments

The Pathways from Poverty Team has identified rural transportation problems as the single most comprehensive component to causing or complicating rural poverty in the state. By hindering self-help desires such as second jobs for single-car families, job training, child care, and health service access, the lack of affordable and dependable transportation options serve to accelerate the cycle of rural poverty. The lack of available or convenient transportation routes to areas where medical, government, and shopping services are present is a serious problem for all age groups in rural Massachusetts. The Rural Development Council has approved funding for the services of a graduate student to research and provide baseline analysis on all modes of federal, state, and privately funded transportation services within the rural areas of the Commonwealth.

Regional Transit Authorities, Head Start, Senior Citizen Vans, private service providers, Social Service protective transportation, and others will provide services and transportation. The Pathways Team has identified a workplan that will guide its activities over the next six months.

Future Plans

The Pathways Team is now focusing on gathering information about existing transportation programs in the rural areas of Massachusetts. The Team has hired a graduate student from the regional planning department at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, to help in collecting this information and data. The student will conduct a survey to obtain current information on transportation programs within the rural areas of the state. This information will be plotted in digital format utilizing Trans Cad™.

Once the information is gathered, the Pathways Team will conduct a series of focus groups to determine what key issues should be included in the program. The team also will decide who will be part of a statewide forum.

Follow-Up Seed Grant Funds

The Massachusetts Pathways from Poverty Team has requested a total of $1,300 in support for their efforts in battling poverty in rural Massachusetts. The money helped to offset the cost of a summer intern that was hired to help the team.

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COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE

Where

More than 450 Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farms are currently operating throughout the country, with more than half in the Northeast.

Mission

A concept imported from Switzerland and Japan is currently helping Massachusetts farmers enjoy better returns on their produce and is providing low-income residents, among others, with access to fresh, locally grown vegetables. Community Supported Agriculture is a loose partnership of mutual commitment between people who grow local food and community members who consume it. This fall marks the tenth anniversary since the concept was introduced to the U.S., with more than 450 groups operating in the country (more than half located in the Northeast).

In addition to benefiting farmers and consumers, the concept benefits regional economies as well. In the Northeast, for example, approximately 85% of the food consumed each year is imported from other regions in the country and abroad. In Massachusetts, this translates to an annual $4 billion leak in the economy. Studies have determined that Massachusetts could produce closer to 35% of its food needs. This 20% increase would add nearly $1 billion to the state economy. Community Supported Agriculture is an innovative and resourceful way of growing the food supply and keeping food dollars in the community.

The goal of each group is to create a financially self-sustaining operation that utilizes proper land stewardship. Integrated cropping, crop rotation, pest management, and seed saving are standard procedures or goals. Another goal is to develop each site to its fullest potential, expanding into honey, eggs, meat, etc., and networking with nearby farms already producing these items.

How

A Community Supported Agriculture Farm is typically started by a food grower who offers shares in the produce based on the true cost of growing food for one year. Costs include salaries of the growers, distribution, seeds, soil amendments, equipment, etc. Total cost is divided by the number of persons the land can provide for. The resulting figure is the cost of one share of the harvest. Members agree to pay their "share" of the cost as well as share the risk and bounty of food production with the grower. In return, members receive local, same-day-fresh vegetables 43 weeks of the year. Additional food products may include bread, honey, eggs, meat, maple syrup, fruits, herbs, flowers, etc. Each CSA farm determines its own policy of food distribution, whether it involves members picking up their shares at the farm or a convenient drop-off site.

Some groups insist on member participation for harvest days, or several work days in the course of the year, while others leave participation as an option and have plenty of volunteer help, particularly for harvest and distribution.

Accomplishments

Projects vary considerably and tend to be designed for the community for which they provide. Memberships are known to include homeless people, food stamp recipients, the elderly, and disabled people who pay an extra fee for door delivery.

The diversification of the capitalization and risk over the consumer group allows the farmer/gardener to do the best job possible. Members share the bounty as well as the risk. An example of how this works is the Indian Line Farm CSA in South Egremont, MA. During the first year of operations, a freak thunderstorm dropped eight inches of rain in three hours. Due to the integrated cropping and disc-harrowed raised beds, the winter storage squash was the only real loss, translating into a $35 loss on each share purchase. Had this not been a CSA operation, the loss to the farmer would have been $3500.

An added plus of the arrangement is that it offers consumers the option of buying organically grown vegetables, as opposed to "cosmetically perfect" (through herbicide/pesticide usage) produce sold by most supermarkets.

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THE E.F. SCHUMACHER SOCIETY

Where

Great Barrington, Berkshire region of Massachusetts

Mission

The purpose of the E. F. Schumacher Society is to promote the ideas inherent in the decentralist tradition, and to implement them in practical programs for local economic self-reliance. The Society works to present a clear and integrated vision that can lead to a sustainable, decentralized "economy of permanence" that nurtures the earth and its inhabitants.

How

The E. F. Schumacher Society was founded in 1980, and has worked in community-based economics to promote the ideas of E. F. Schumacher, an English economist and conservationist. Schumacher's works and beliefs centered around the ideas of: local production and consumption, regional control of land, democratic workplaces, and decentralized financing systems. The Society is a national source of expertise in building or renewing strong local economies. They do this largely through micro-lending programs and the use of alternative local currencies, or "scrip." The Society also conducts various seminars and workshops dealing with economic self-sufficiency.

Through the Self Help Association for a Regional Economy (SHARE), the Society has helped small businesses across the country. SHARE is a micro-lending program in which members authorize their savings accounts as collateral for loans to small local businesses. Members of SHARE patronize these businesses and promote them within the community. All SHARE loans have been under $3,000, and the program has become a model of success for similar programs across the country.

SHARE also has been responsible for the increased use of local scrip, or currency that only has value and exchange purposes within local communities.

The Society also has been active in promoting and operating community land trusts, a form of common ownership of land that removes land from the market and facilitates multiple uses such as affordable housing, agriculture, and open space preservation.

The E. F. Schumacher Center houses the central offices of the Society as well as a 5,000-volume library of books, and other information on decentralism, local currency experiments, community land trusts, and related topics. The Center also contains a publications service, conference hall, and rooms for visiting scholars.

Accomplishments

In the past few years, the SHARE program has provided loans, usually between $500 and $3,000, to a range of local businesses. The Society also has worked to educate local residents through the use of their Center and the various workshops it offers.

One example of the success of local currency is the use of Deli Dollars by Great Barrington Deli owner Frank Tortoriello. When turned down by a local bank for a loan, Tortoriello came up with an idea encouraged by SHARE: he printed up his own money. Each Deli Dollar sold for $8, and was worth $10 in food as long as customers waited for a certain amount of time to use it. Customers received discounts, while Tortoriello raised money to move into a bigger store. Tortoriello became a successful store owner, and the idea of using local currency gained popularity. Five other businesses and two farm produce stands in the community also have used scrip. Building on these successes, the Society organized merchants, banks, and town governments to initiate an interc[illegible]geable local currency, *Berkshare*, in the Berkshire region.

Funding

The Society's work is supported primarily by contributions from its members. Its annual budget of $100,000 comes exclusively from individuals and small foundations. The Society also sells its publications at cost.

Future Plans

The Schumacher Society looks to the future as a time of even greater success. The Center is currently working on cataloguing its library and hopes that teachers, researchers, and community activists will eventually be able to view this collection over the Internet.

As part of its outreach, the Society is also planning to get its information on-line. Communities across the country will be able to get information about the local currency system, land trusts, or any other program the Society has to offer.

Testimony

"I put five hundred notes on sale, and they went in a flash. Deli Dollars turned up all over town. It was astonishing."

-- Frank Tortoriello, owner of the Deli in Great Barrington in which Deli Dollars were used.

Contact

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GREEN THUMB, INC.

Where

This Massachusetts-based program serves senior citizens from Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont.

Mission

Green Thumb, Inc. helps senior citizens lead more active lifestyles. For many senior citizens, life after retirement is a desperate time spent struggling to make ends meet on a fixed income or no income at all. It is with these elderly citizens that programs such as Green Thumb, Inc. can make a real difference. Focusing on the oldest and poorest members of society, the New England branch of Green Thumb currently provides training, employment, and community service opportunities to about 540 senior citizens in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont.

How

All participants in the program must be 55 or older and must meet certain income guidelines. Participants must have an income at or below 125% of the poverty level. Participants work part-time, usually for minimum wage, for government and non-profit agencies, providing services that many of the agencies would otherwise be unable to afford. The participants tutor students, teach skilled trades and crafts, provide home health and day care, operate computers, and work as clerks, mechanics, and laborers. Often the jobs are with agencies that assist other seniors. Meals on Wheels, for example, relies on Green Thumb, Inc. participants to provide many of their services. The participants' wages and fringe benefits are paid by Green Thumb, Inc., while training and supervision are provided by the host agency.

Within each state, Green Thumb, Inc. often works with other social service organizations. In Massachusetts, for example, Massachusetts Job Service provides office space, phone and photocopier usage, and referral and job match services. The Job Training Partnership Act offers computer training and conducts workplace readiness workshops for participants. In Connecticut, state welfare department staff explain Green Thumb, Inc. services to recipients, offering them a chance to move from welfare to meaningful employment.

Accomplishments

In addition to providing seniors with a way to earn extra money and make positive contributions to their community, the program also can serve as a bridge from the subsidized government agency jobs to unsubsidized jobs with private employers. For the past six years, Green Thumb, Inc., has placed over 20% of its participants in unsubsidized jobs.

Funding

Green Thumb, Inc. is a national non-profit agency funded by the U. S. Department of Labor's Senior Community Service Employment Program. This program has had a positive effect on the entire senior citizen community. Unfortunately, some in Washington, D. C. feel that the Senior Community Service Employment Program is expendable, particularly in these budget-cutting times. Pending legislation would replace the program and combine its funds into block grants that would go directly to the states. "*Such action would be a disservice to the elderly population,*" said David Affeldt, former chief counsel with the U. S. Senate Committee on Aging. "*Block grants historically have not served older workers well, which was why the legislation to create this program came about in the first place,*" he said. "*If it's funded through block grants, then fifteen to twenty thousand workers served each year will get their pink slips.*"

Testimony

Green Thumb, Inc. participants say the program offers them a chance to improve the quality of their lives. Ruth Coolley, 75, of Manchester, New Hampshire, files records part-time in a medical office. "*It keeps me busy, and I like to work because there's a very pleasant atmosphere here, and the hours are nice,*" Coolley said. "*I think it's much better to be working than sitting at home feeling sorry for yourself, which a lot of people tend to do.*" Janet Green of Hiram, Maine, said that participating in Green Thumb, Inc. "*makes you feel like a human being again instead of a second-class citizen.*"

Green Thumb, Inc. participants aren't the only ones hailing the program. *Washington Post* columnist Judy Mann wrote that the Senior Community Service Program, of which Green Thumb, Inc. is a part, "*serves the poorest of the elderly while providing a wide variety of services that make our communities livable.*" U. S. Representative John Balducci (ME) commented that "*when you talk to people about programs like Green Thumb, Inc., you can see their self-esteem rise. That has a ripple effect in the entire community.*"

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THE NORTHERN BERKSHIRE COMMUNITY COALITION

Where

Based in North Adams, MA, this non-profit organization serves the mostly rural Northern Berkshire region of western Massachusetts.

Mission

The Northern Berkshire Community Coalition serves as coordinator of a variety of community-based support groups that focus on the areas of public health, community involvement, and education, with the overall goal of becoming a healthier community that cares equally for all of its citizens.

How

In addition to relying on volunteers for many of its activities, the Coalition collaborates with area schools, local and regional human service agencies, and other volunteer organizations to bring its goals to fruition. Meetings that are open to all interested community members are held each month to discuss community needs and Coalition activities.

The Coalition was able to assist in the creation of Public Health Incentive Grants totaling approximately $10,000 through its association with Partners for Public Health. These grants have been provided to local public health projects, including substance abuse prevention, outreach to special populations, and parenting education. North Adams State College provides the Coalition with office space and support.

Accomplishments

Better access to health care, increased community involvement through stimulating programs, public forums and activities, and a greater sense of community between young and old alike are some of the results generated by the Coalition's work in the Northern Berkshire area.

As a member of Partners for Public Health, one of seven national projects bringing knowledge and resources from the medical community closer to local communities, the Coalition has been able to implement local health and human needs assessments, Public Health Incentive Grants, and a scholarship to help a local resident attend the University of Massachusetts' School of Public Health.

Funding from the project also contributed to the formation of Northern Berkshire Neighbors, a program that offers new opportunities for citizen involvement in local communities. Two six-week workshops on neighborhood organizing, fairs, exhibits, and Martin Luther King Day activities are some of the events that have been sponsored by the Northern Berkshires Neighbors program.

Area youth are given the opportunity to participate in community affairs through the Coalition-sponsored U.N.I.T.Y. program. UNITY members volunteer in local nursing homes, participate in substance abuse prevention activities, and work with young children on communication skills. The Coalition also sponsored task forces that dealt with family and children's issues, organized meetings with state and national leaders to discuss issues pertaining to Northern Berkshire, and published a booklet featuring poems and artwork from local children.

Funding

Partial funding is provided by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation's Community Based Public Health Initiative. Additional support is provided by the University of Massachusetts Medical School, the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, and individual donations from community members.

Future Plans

With the goal of greater citizen participation in community affairs, the Coalition plans to increase the number of neighborhood groups throughout the region. The Coalition is also researching the need for improved services for the homeless.

Testimony

"I'm really proud of the community groups we've helped to form," said Coalition director Al Bashevskin. *"In a time when most citizens seem to have lost touch with their government, these groups provide a forum for people to speak out about their own needs and their community's needs."*

An example, said Bashevskin, was a community group the Coalition helped start in an impoverished, drug-ridden neighborhood in North Adams. Children in the neighborhood had no place to play other than the dangerous streets. By working with a local developer, the citizens of the community group transformed a vacant lot into a playground.

"That's an example of what neighbors can do when they have a forum that brings them together," Bashevskin said.

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South County Pediatrics

Where

Webster County and the rural, southern section of Worcester County, Massachusetts.

Mission

South County Pediatrics is committed to the provision of high quality, comprehensive health care to all children from birth to young adulthood regardless of ability to pay. Parent-child health education, wellness care, and disease prevention among children are other services provided by the practice. The practice also supervises the training of medical students and residents in community-based primary care pediatrics and continuously monitors the quality and effectiveness of the services that it provides.

How

South County Pediatrics was established in 1978 with funding from the State Department of Public Health. With a staff of two pediatricians and a nurse practitioner, the practice provides comprehensive pediatric care to patients through close networking with the Department of Public Health-funded WIC program and other community agencies. This care includes immunization services, developmental assessments, child care, lead screening, care for acute illnesses and an easy route for access to pediatric specialists at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center for children with special needs. The practice saw seven thousand visits during the past year—40% of the patients had Medicaid, and 10% had no health insurance at all.

In addition to pediatric care, the practice offers care to teen mothers, alcohol-affected families, and recent immigrants. The practice also plays an important role in community affairs by providing regular columns on children's health to local newspapers, operating an evening adolescent clinic, and establishing a Car Seat Loan Program that provides infant and toddler car seats to low-income families.

Funding

The practice receives no federal funding because its service area, though short of pediatricians, is not officially considered a "health shortage area." Because it receives no federal funds, the practice relies on customers who have the ability to pay to help cover the costs of those who can't. Toward this end, the practice has worked to get on local Health Management Organization plans to ensure access to paying customers.

Future Plans

The practice would like to become more involved in the local school system in order to better serve children with special needs. It is the area's primary provider of services to children with Attention Deficit Disorder Syndrome and hopes to expand this program and others dealing with teen pregnancy and health prevention programs.

Testimony

"We've provided high quality community-oriented pediatric care to all the children of Southern Worcester County, with a strong commitment to community collaboration as a means of approaching complex biopsychosocial problems of the underserved children of the region," said program director David Keller.

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NEW HAMPSHIRE

Pathways from Poverty Team

Accomplishments

The New Hampshire Pathways from Poverty Team has incorporated its efforts into a "Pathways to Prosperity" initiative. This is a community development project coordinated by the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension in collaboration with private and public partners. The collaborative efforts of this initiative will provide an effective vehicle for Pathways from Poverty. It sets the stage for being an integral part of a positive collaborative community development effort, rather than a separate effort in the community. The team believes its efforts in the battle against poverty will be more effective using this collaboration.

Follow-Up Seed Grant Funds

The New Hampshire Pathways from Poverty Team requested $1300 in funds from the Northeast Center . The money will be used to support 3-4 regional forums and a strategic planning meeting for the Pathways to Prosperity team, phone and mailing costs, report production, and travel costs.

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HANNAH HOUSE

Where
Lebanon, New Hampshire

Mission
"The purpose of Hannah House is to support pregnant and parenting youth in developing independence and making healthy parenting choices, thereby promoting the well-being of themselves and their children."

How
Hannah House provides services to all interested pregnant and parenting teens and their children through a residential program in Lebanon, New Hampshire, and an outreach program to the Upper Connecticut River Valley of New Hampshire and Vermont. The goal of Hannah House is to help young parents acquire the skills they need to become independent and responsible family and community members. The young people who participate in this program must be pregnant or parenting, and chronologically or developmentally under the age of 22. In addition to essential parenting skills, participants gain the knowledge, confidence, and self-esteem necessary to realize their personal goals and to assure the health and well-being of their children. Hannah House teens receive one-on-one counseling that addresses their current situation and needs. Hannah House also offers education in the areas of prenatal and childbirth education, child development and behavior, and home safety. It also offers a number of vocational services, including tutoring toward the GED, job-oriented academic remediation, exploration of various vocations, job readiness and skill development, and job placement. Hannah House recently created a new program that helps young people learn how to have successful parenting relationships. This program also shows young people how to deal with abusive relationships if they are ever faced with them. Hannah House also offers an on-site day care center for parents who work, attend school, or participate in job training programs.

Accomplishments
Providing programs that lay firm foundations for healthy, developing families, Hannah House has served approximately 140 teens in its residential program since 1988 and approximately eight hundred teens in its outreach program. There are several goals that measure the success of the program, says Executive Director Randy Walker. Hannah House has helped teens to create strong bonds with their children by giving them good models to follow and has prevented second pregnancies among their residents. These goals have been accomplished by educating the teens to live more successful and responsible lives and by showing them the benefits of waiting to have more children while creating better lives for themselves. Walker encourages others who direct similar programs to fight abuse issues and to stay active in ensuring safe, healthy environments for their clients.

Walker tells of many success stories from Hannah House. One example is that of a young mother who was a resident at Hannah House for a year. While there, she had her baby and was learning to care for her newborn. When the state terminated her case after a year, she was forced to return to her home, where her un-supportive mother forced her to take care of her younger sibling as well as her newborn. Because of her hard life at home, she used what she learned at Hannah House and moved out to her own apartment, where she is caring for her child while successfully putting her life back together.

Funding
The funding for Hannah House comes from several supporters. The residential program receives funding from New Hampshire and Vermont. They receive Title 20 funds and federal funds for the on-site day care center. The breakfasts and lunches at the residence and day care center are provided by the Department of Education. The outreach program receives funding from an annual campaign and from various foundation grants. Monies from United Way, the city of Lebanon, and Grafton County also help fund Hannah House.

Future Plans
Hannah House hopes to provide more programs in the future to address teen pregnancy. They also would like to create transitional housing, where their residents could learn independent living skills in a supervised apartment-style environment.

Testimony
"I came to Hannah House at the age of sixteen. I was a scared, pregnant teenager who didn't have a clue what all was going to happen in the next year. Now that I'm leaving, I can look back and see how much I've grown here. I wish that same experience for every young woman who enters Hannah House."

—Former Hannah House resident

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Mt. Washington Valley Economic Council

Where

North Conway, New Hampshire

Mission

Improving and diversifying the economy of New Hampshire's Mt. Washington Valley region is the goal of this non-profit corporation. To pursue this goal, the Council works with local businesses to train greatly needed stitchers, implement active business visitation programs, and expand the area's recreational facilities to encourage tourism.

How

The stitcher-training program consists of a four-week course offering fifty hours of training to five students per class. Students are trained in the operation of industrial stitching machines by a vocational school instructor, using machines obtained with the assistance of local apparel companies and a $6,500 grant. Free classroom space is provided in the town recreation center. The program has a tuition fee of $150 per student, and is open to residents of the Mt. Washington Valley region. Information about the program is posted at welfare offices throughout the region, and at least one welfare recipient has enrolled in the program.

Accomplishments

Five participants successfully graduated from the Council's stitcher training program in June, and a new class began training in July. Three of the graduates have found well-paying jobs with benefits at local apparel companies, while one has left the state and the other found a job with a manufacturing firm. Several towns in the region have offered to pay students' tuition.

Funding

Volunteers with the business visitation program alerted the Council to the local apparel manufacturers' need for additional trained stitchers. Using a $6,500 grant received from the Northern New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, the Council purchased three new industrial stitching machines. Additional machines and stitching materials were provided by local industries.

Future Plans

Keeping up with technology will be the focus of the stitcher training program, with plans for an additional, more advanced industrial stitching machine in the works. There are no plans to expand the number of students in each class.

"In order to offer as much hands-on training and personal instruction as possible to the students, we feel that five per class is enough," Council president David Sorensen said.

The Council plans to assist the local economy in other areas as well. A $700,000 federal block grant to be administered by the Council will help area businesses expand or improve their facilities. The Council's Business Visitation Program will identify companies that need and qualify for the loans. Interest and principal from the loans will be plowed back into a permanent fund that will allow the Council to continually offer micro-loans to companies wishing to expand.

Testimony

"Many grant programs look at a return of one trained employee per $10,000," said Sorensen. *"With our stitcher training program, we have five trained for employment for $6,500, and there will be more to follow."*

"Obviously the industry is fully supportive of the program, because they will be gaining trained workers," Sorensen said. *"The individual gains as well, since the starting pay for these jobs is good, benefits packages are provided, and work scheduling flexibility is offered."*

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NORTHERN TRI-STATES COMMUNITY SERVICES

Where

Upper Connecticut Valley area of Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont.

Mission

Based in the Upper Connecticut Valley Hospital in Colebrook, NH, Northern Tri-States Community Services' (NTCS) mission is to create and maintain a formal network of health and health-related services in the rural, relatively isolated area served by the hospital. The purpose of NTCS is to identify available services, identify service deficiencies, and create programs to resolve those deficiencies. The priorities of the network are to create and implement programs for Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries, the poor, and the general population, in the areas of public health services, wellness programs, insurance benefit counseling, and a community survey of needs.

How

Extending across parts of Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont, the Upper Connecticut Valley is typical of many rural areas in that it contains many small, relatively isolated towns with limited access to health care services.

High rates of teenage births, underweight newborns, obesity, and smoking are prevalent health concerns of the area. Additionally, the presence of a large elderly population with its own set of medical problems and needs further highlighted the requirement for a comprehensive wellness program that would allow the region to develop a proactive response to the area's health problems. With the help of the Federal Rural Health Care Transition Grant, Northern Tri-States Community Services was formed to initiate this response.

An advisory committee made up of representatives from area educational, health, and social service agencies was formed. A professional consulting firm was hired to perform telephone and focus group surveys and extract pertinent information from various State and County agencies. This information was incorporated into the needs assessment report, which was communicated to the public, July-August 1994.

Among the needs identified by the assessment was the prevention of teen-age pregnancy, which contributes to the area's high rate of underweight newborn infants and inadequate prenatal care. The committee's response was to form a Teen Task Force comprised of guidance counselors and teachers from area schools, a nurse, a family physician, and a minister. During its initial meetings, the task force chose prevention of teen pregnancy as its mission and identified local eighth-graders as the target audience for programs and information. At this time, the task force has coordinated two conferences and a follow-up program, and hopes to expand its membership to include school board members, parents, and all community members interested in combating teen pregnancy.

Accomplishments

A handbook, which provides a comprehensive list of the area's health, human, and social service agencies is the first direct result of the network's collaborative efforts. The network advisory committee carried out a community needs assessment report to identify and prioritize the health and service needs of the community. Programs developed and/or coordinated in response to the needs assessment include a Medicare Assistance Program to provide counseling to Medicare recipients, a cancer screening program that provides screenings on a regular basis, and American Cancer Society "Fresh Start" smoking cessation programs. Elderly exercise programs, free emergency telephone response units for low-income elderly residents, Adult Heartsaver CPR training, Arthritis Clinics, Glaucoma Screenings and Education, Diabetes Screening and Education, Stress Workshops, and AARP 55 Alive programs are some of the programs that Northern Tri-States Community Services has initiated in the area.

Funding

All programs are volunteer-run and offered at no cost to the public, with advertising costs paid for with funds from the Federal Rural Health Care Transition grant.

Future Plans

In the near future, Northern Tri-States Community Services plans to explore the use of a foundation or community coalition structure to allow for the possibility of block funding. In addition to block funding, the transition will formalize collaborative efforts to prevent duplication of services, enhance agency communication, and facilitate referrals.

"*We want to be a model of resource and talent-sharing, operating as a community for the community.*" said Francine Bigney, program coordinator.

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PLANNING AHEAD . . . STAYING AHEAD

Where

New Hampshire

Mission

Planning Ahead . . . Staying Ahead teaches low-income residents how to make wiser use of their limited resources through Resource and Money Management, Nutrition Awareness, and Conflict Resolution.

How

The program offers instruction in three areas: Money Management, Human Development, and Food and Nutrition. Courses in Money Management include topics such as identifying available resources, stretching resources, designing a spending/savings plan, and the benefits/disadvantages of buying on credit (including rent-to-own, credit cards, and layaway). Human Development topics include identifying the reasons why people disagree, and successful conflict resolution. Food and Nutrition topics include planning nutritional menus, food safety, healthy snack choices, and saving money on food purchases.

The program is a collaborative effort between the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension and the state Division of Human Services. Cooperative Extension provides the curriculum instruction. The Division of Human Services provides instructional sites. Other agencies that utilize the program's curriculum include Head Start, Housing Authority, Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and parent-child centers.

Extension staff have developed an instructor's notebook, a four-color workbook given to all participants for each curriculum area, a set of pre-printed envelopes for managing money, applicable agency pamphlets, and a laminated color flipchart that fits on a standard easel. These materials are offered as a kit to instructors interested in teaching the program.

Accomplishments

Planning Ahead. . . Staying Ahead is making a difference in the lives of its participants. Results from end-of-workshop evaluations reveal that participants have changed their spending behavior in a variety of ways due to this curriculum. People have contacted creditors when previously they waited until they received a disconnect notice or eviction. Many are utilizing the envelope method and have found that they are able to stretch their food resources to last a month, or have found that more of their bills are getting paid. The majority are now more conscious about the choices made in relation to their use of resources.

Funding

Funding is currently provided through the USDA's Consumer and Nutrition Service.

Future Plans

"One of the program's strengths is that the lesson plans are continuously evolving, rather than staying static," said program director Suzann Enzian Knight. An example is the research she is conducting on New Hampshire banks that offer checking accounts with no minimum balance requirements. Once Knight's research is completed, her findings will be incorporated into the program's money management curriculum.

The agency is currently working with the welfare reform effort in New Hampshire to expand the curriculum to allow for greater participation by welfare recipients. The agency also is producing two videotapes that will accompany the curriculum. Ideas and suggestions for the videos were offered by two focus groups of limited-resource participants.

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New Jersey

Pathways from Poverty Team

Team Vision

The *vision* of the New Jersey Pathways from Poverty Team is to serve as a catalyst to solve problems of rural poverty within the state of New Jersey.

Accomplishments

The New Jersey Pathways from Poverty Team has been involved in assessing poverty issues in rural areas of the state. The team is investigating the most difficult obstacles preventing the rural people of New Jersey from escaping from poverty. The team plans to continue this research, so that solutions may be discovered for these problems in their state. The team will continue to work toward achievement of their goals and action plans set at the conference last fall.

Follow-Up Seed Grant Funds

The New Jersey Pathways from Poverty Team requested $1300 in funds from the Northeast Center. These funds will be used for a regional planning meeting.

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NEW YORK

Pathways from Poverty Team

Accomplishments

The New York Pathways from Poverty Team, working under the direction of Jack Salo, has been very successful in the past few months. Joan Sinclair, Commissioner at the Allegheny County Department of Social Services, has now taken Salo's place as coordinator of the team. The team has published a paper titled *Establishing Pathways from Poverty in a Block Grant Environment.* This work came about after a very successful meeting the team held in December of 1995, and provides eight key policy recommendations for reducing poverty in New York. The paper was published by the Community and Rural Development Institute at Cornell. The policies described in the work focus on improving the health and welfare decision-making process in a block grant environment. These policies have been accepted by all members, and constitute simplified, flexible program and administrative supports for making block granting work effectively and efficiently.

The team has been very active in gaining the support of important policy and advocacy groups in Albany for the paper and its policies. It has contracted with the State Communities Aid Association to conduct an analysis of both current and proposed welfare policies and legislation affecting the rural poor in the state. Once this report is completed, the team plans to meet again and discuss its next steps. The team has also prepared an update on its activities for the W.K. Kellogg Foundation in hopes that more funding may be received for additional projects in the state.

Future Plans

The New York Pathways Team has asked the State Communities Aid Association and other groups for guidance on how the Pathways Team can be most valuable to furthering the interests of the rural poor in New York State. There are already a number of statewide organizations that serve the rural poor, and the team hopes that with this feedback, these organizations can become a more successful and effective group.

Follow-Up Seed Grant Funds

The New York Pathways from Poverty Team has requested approximately $1,300 from the Northeast Center for various uses. A portion of the funds was requested to cover the costs of transportation and child care expenses for low income members of the team, allowing them the chance to attend state team meetings. The remainder of the funds requested were for the development of a research-analysis paper that the state team contracted with the State Communities Aid Association. This paper is associated with the team's efforts to establish pathways from poverty in block grant environments.

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THE ADIRONDACK NORTH COUNTRY ASSOCIATION

Where

Located in northern New York State, the Adirondack North Country is a 10,000 square mile region (fourteen counties) beginning at the Mohawk River, extending to the Canadian border, and including the area between Lake Ontario and Lake Champlain.

The Adirondack North Country Association's (ANCA) central office is found in Saranac Lake, NY.

Mission

The Association functions primarily as a regional economic development catalyst. It is The Association's goal to directly benefit residents and businesses of the North Country through various activities, representation, and endeavors.

How

Founded in 1954, The Association is an independent, non-profit organization assimilating individuals from tourism, industry, banking, education, economic development, and government. One goal of The Association is to create a greater sense of regional identity and pride through advocacy and promotion. The Association monitors public policies, encourages discussion of issues that impact the region, and advocates policies which would benefit business development.

As a sustainable economic development association, the Adirondack North Country Association creates and retains jobs, increases goods and services, and utilizes resources of the region. Programs in tourism, agriculture, and natural resources, maximize the scenic, recreational, and industrial opportunities of the region.

Economic development is spurred through micro-loans to businesses, educational training workshops, wholesale marketing programs, waste reduction and recycling services, and introductions to regional economic development agencies. New telecommunication technologies are also provided to expand business development.

The Association assists the farming industry by exploring new markets, creating cooperatives, and administering loans for agribusinesses. The Association also strives to strengthen industry (by retaining jobs and creating collaborations), while protecting the region's natural environment.

Lastly, The Association has a commitment to improve the quality of life for residents in northern New York State. A comprehensive listing of organizations and facilities involved in the development and support of the arts community has been published, and programs have also focused attention on rural health care issues and the improvement of the job skills.

Currently, The Association is governed by a forty-member Board of Directors that represents all fourteen counties of the North Country. The Board administers programs and funding through a small, full-time staff headquartered in Saranac Lake.

Accomplishments

The Association has taken the lead in North Country development for over 40 years, and has been an advocate for the stabilization and reuse of the Adirondack Rail Corridor and a supporter of the Scenic Byway program (a system of eleven auto trails connecting the region along themes of local and historical significance).

The Association has supported the Adirondack Economic Development Corporation in the development of a Small Business Administration Microloan Program. The Crafts Store in Lake Placid, which represents more than 250 North Country businesses, and North Country Products, a national marketing program, have helped to promote the region's products throughout the country.

The Association has given support to various forestry associations as well as to the St. Lawrence/Black River Resource and Conservation Districts. This provides representation of the industry at every level from safety workshops to trade shows.

Funding

The Association guarantees that all funding it receives will directly benefit the residents of the North Country region. Since 1985, programs for the Adirondack North Country have benefited from the receipt of grant funding from the State of New York. Core programs and headquarters are maintained with this state funding. Additional funding is received from a variety of sources such as grant monies, small businesses, individuals, corporations, and counties in New York State.

Future Plans

The Association looks to the future as a promise of hope, and plans to build its success and continue to provide a voice for the Adirondack North Country Region. Continued support from contributors will help support new activities focused on improving the economic development, agriculture industry, tourism industry, and quality of life for the Adirondack North Country region.

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AGRI-BUSINESS CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Where

The Agri-Business Child Development program sponsors Migrant Head Start Centers in eleven locations (serving nine counties) in New York State. Regional headquarters are found in Rochester and Poughkeepsie, NY. The state headquarters of the program are found in Schenectady, NY. Head Start programs are found in each state of the United States.

Mission

Each Head Start Center across the state works to provide various services to children of migrant families and local agricultural families. The goals of each center are to provide quality education, health care, active parent involvement, social services, transportation, and service to the children.

How

Agri-Business Child Development is a program operated by the New York State Federation of Growers' and Processors' Association, Inc. The major project of this Child Development program is Migrant Head Start.

The Migrant Head Start program helps children of families employed in agriculture across the state. For children to be eligible, at least one parent must be employed in agriculture, both parents must be employed, and their income must not exceed the federal poverty line.

Each Head Start Center offers a full day of programming not only for migrant children aged six weeks to six years, but also for resettled migrant children and for low-income, local, agricultural children. The centers provide programming during the summer and some even provide after school programs.

One goal of the Head Start Program is to provide quality education to the children by designing educational programs to meet individual, ethnic, and cultural needs. Every child receives a variety of learning experiences to foster intellectual, social, and emotional growth. The Head Start Centers also help to ease each child's transition into the public schools and hold parent orientation sessions to help the parents realize their role in the transition.

Head Start also provides knowledge and information about health care. Every child receives a comprehensive health care program, including medical, dental, mental health, and nutritional services.

Head Start works to involve parents in program planning and operating activities. Through participation in classes and workshops on child development and through staff visits to migrant camps, parents learn about the needs of their children, and about educational activities that can be carried out at home. Parents also serve in Head Start on a volunteer or paid basis.

Head Start also offers social service opportunities, such as community outreach, referrals, family needs assessments, and emergency assistance.

Each Center has been successful in its provision of services to children with disabilities. At least 10 percent of the enrollment is made available for such children. Children with disabilities receive the full range of Head Start developmental services, as well as extra services provided to meet the special needs of each child.

Accomplishments

In the 1994-1995 fiscal year, the Head Start Centers served 1,452 children across the state. Agency-wide goals for this period were to serve more children for more child development days, to serve more children with disabilities, and to maintain high quality multi-cultural services within their staff involvement and activities. Each goal was met successfully. Compared to the 1993-1994 year, 211 more children were served for an additional 6,498 child development days. The number of children identified as having disabilities increased by twenty-two. The Head Start program also increased the number of staff leadership positions held by persons of color by four percent.

Funding

The major funding sources of Agri-Business Child Development programs are the East Coast Migrant Head Start program, the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, and the US Department of Agriculture. Special grants, donations, programs, and the Department of Social Services also provide support to the Child Development program.

Future Plans

The Agri-Business Child Development program looks forward to the future as an opportunity to continue serving the children of New York. Each Head Start Center looks to expand services as well as increase attendance. Now that federal Head Start regulations have changed, each Center will be able to serve migrant children for an additional twelve months beyond the initial twelve-month eligibility period. This will allow each Head Start Center to provide a more hopeful future for each child it serves.

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THE AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Where

Training classes through nine State University of New York community colleges and one technical college in the State of New York. The administrative offices of the program are found in the State Department of Agriculture and Markets, based in Albany, New York.

Mission

The Agricultural Workforce Certification Program (AWCP) is designed to increase and improve the number of qualified year-round agricultural employees. This is accomplished by providing training and employment placement as appropriate for individuals seeking specialized, commodity-based farm employment.

How

The Program was developed in 1993 as a multi-agency collaborative agreement between the New York State Departments of Agriculture and Markets, Labor, Economic Development, the State University of New York, and Cornell Cooperative Extension. Farmers were having trouble finding employees with quality experience or training, so the Program was formed to create training programs and assist in job placement. Steven Greenberg of New York's Department of Agriculture and Markets said, *"The program was designed to meet the employer's needs and desires."*

The Program works with ten colleges across the state to provide training courses. To date, the courses have targeted three industry groups: dairy, nursery, and fruit. A diverse group of participants have been trained in six disciplines including milker, herdsperson, orchard specialist, orchard manager, arborist, and greenhouse specialist. After they complete the training, participants are awarded certificates.

One example of a workforce program is the Dairy Milker Training program at Herkimer County Community College. This comprehensive training program was held in March of 1996, and was created by experts in dairy milking and reviewed by farm employers. The program required twenty hours of classroom training and twenty hours of on-farm experience. This on-farm experience opened doors to job opportunities for several participants.

Accomplishments

In its first year, 180 people across the state attended 20 hours of classes at six community colleges and twenty more hours of on-farm training. Of those, about one hundred had never worked on farms. Of these newcomers, around 25 percent found jobs after certification.

In the 1994-95 season, the Program certified 198 farmworkers. Approximately half were placed in farm employment. Most of the remaining half received improvement in compensation and benefits from their current employers. Genessee Community College's milker training program has been one of the most successful; of the twenty-three milkers it trained—none of whom had previous dairy farm experience—all but one found jobs.

Fuding

Funding is provided by the Departments of Economic Development and Labor. Employer groups and program participants also provide funding. In its first year, the AWCP received $186,000 in federal and state money. That was supplemented with $90,000 in local money. Some programs charge students a fee ranging from $25 to $75.

Future Plans

The Program is looking at increasing the number of community colleges offering training courses, increasing the number of classes so that more people may participate, and adding vegetable specialist, vegetable manager, and vineyard specialist disciplines.

During this year, the Program looks to operate around 17 to 20 programs, certifying a minimum of 350 candidates.

"And we're hoping for the future that most of the workforce will be certified," says Greenberg.

Testimony

The program fulfills a genuine need for qualified people in the agriculture industry.

"Good people are hard to find, and when we get them, we don't always have the time to train them the way we should," said orchard farmer Larry Cosman who enrolled his farm managers in the program.

"Qualified milkers are in demand. We had no problem placing students who had previously completed the course and sought milking jobs," said Dan Twentyman, coordinator of the milker training program in Cayuga County.

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The Agriculture Business Effectiveness Program

Where

Seneca Trail Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) region/State of New York. The administrative offices of the program are housed in the Seneca Trail RC&D Council office in Franklinville, NY.

Mission

The purpose of the Agriculture Business Effectiveness Program is to merge the necessary technology and management methods to assist businesses of the agriculture industry to progress to more modern, integrated, and productive systems.

How

The agriculture industry is a vital component of the economic viability of the State of New York, however, the strength of the industry has suffered. According to a 1991 regional survey, the area's dairy industry and its related businesses were adopting new technology at a much slower rate than the rest of the State. Because of this, the dairy industry had fallen behind in efficiency and productivity.

There was yet another problem. Even though agricultural businesses comprise New York State's largest single industry, there were no programs to assist agricultural businesses in improving their performance and profitability. Seeing these rural economic development problems as a danger to the economic stability of the state, the Seneca Trail RC&D Council created the Agriculture Business Effectiveness Program, an innovative program of economic assistance through technology transfer.

One purpose of the Program is to develop a system for the delivery of consultative services to the industry. Since the agriculture industry receives no such services, the Program is working to include the agriculture industry in existing state and local programs that currently provide consultative services to other industries. The agricultural business industry would receive substantial economic benefits from the use of private consultants. Information about rapid technological changes could enable the agriculture industry to keep pace with other industries in the use of new technology.

The Program is also working to acquaint the agriculture industry with private consultants for certain types of management advice. Knowing that private consultants would charge fees, the Program is set up to provide a reimbursement rate of 50%, up to a maximum of $2,000 per program participant. This is a great incentive to agricultural businesses to use private consultants for improving the management of their businesses.

Since the Program's inception in March of 1992, private consultants have provided individual, site-specific recommendations to various agricultural businesses dealing with crop management, business management, herd management, feed management, woodland management, estate planning, and product marketing. The consultants also provide methods of implementing the programs for improvement in these areas.

Accomplishments

The Program has provided recommendations for improving the efficiency, profitability, and viability of various agricultural businesses across the state since its beginning in 1992. To date, reimbursements have been made to 127 agricultural businesses for their use of consultants, at a total of $150,000 in grant dollars. The program participants have expended over $200,000 of their own money for these services. While the final statistics aren't in, current indications of individual business profitability and viability have been very positive. Because of this success, the industry has seen substantial cost savings.

Funding

The Agriculture Business Effectiveness Program receives funds from state and federal sources, like the Appalachian Regional Commission and the Urban Development Corporation. Funds from program participants also aid in supporting the program's success.

Future Plans

Because of the program's success so far, the Seneca Trail RC&D Council looks to the future as a chance for even greater opportunities for agricultural businesses in New York State. The Council and the Project Steering Committee are convinced that the program will enhance the economic viability of the agriculture industry in the state. They also feel certain that the Program will be a model for a permanent state program in the near future.

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Special Note: *The Agriculture Business Effectiveness Program is no longer in operation. Due to its great success, however, project coordinator Howard Schuster looks to reinstate the project in the near future.*

CAREER AND HOME OPPORTUNITIES INTEGRATED WITH COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND SERVICES (C.H.O.I.C.E.S)

Where

Located in Ravena, New York, C.H.O.I.C.E.S. serves a rural section of Albany County.

Mission

In most rural areas, low income individuals attempting to improve their economic status have limited resources to turn to. These individuals are often disconnected from many positive social programs and services within small communities. C.H.O.I.C.E.S. is working to make a difference by not only helping people obtain access to programs and services, but by also giving them the opportunity to give something back by serving their community.

"Welfare has a long history of training people to receive, but not to give back." Linda S. Bruno, program coordinator, said. *"The people involved in this program are changing that."*

The program provides comprehensive services in one central location, and gives participants the opportunity to volunteer with community service programs such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture's commodity distribution, Coats for Kids, and various volunteer programs within the county.

Serving a variety of clients, from the unemployed to the under-employed and under-educated, C.H.O.I.C.E.S. provides the education and job preparation skills that enable these individuals to take their first steps along the road to workplace success.

"C.H.O.I.C.E.S. isn't the end of the road," said Bruno. *"It's only the beginning."*

How

Education is a key element of the program. The center offers twenty hours of programming a week, including General Educational Diploma preparation, tutoring for math and reading, English as a Second Language, Life Skills, Job Readiness Preparation, the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program and Shoppers Club. Classes usually consist of twelve to sixteen people. Workshop topics are chosen by the GED participants, and speakers from training programs and colleges are invited to speak to the classes.

In addition to education, the center also offers comprehensive support services. On-site child care and linkages with community, county, school district and private agencies round out the support services that are provided and coordinated for each individual. Case Management provides for one-on-one counseling throughout the program. Individual testing, assessments, and opportunity contracts (developed by the participants) allow for both long- and short-term goals. Work histories are tracked both during and after participation.

The program works to link community members with jobs by matching participants with employers. Companies looking for qualified personnel contact the center with specific requests. Through interviews and evaluations, the center then acts as a job referral service by determining which participants best match what the prospective employers are looking for. Participants who wish to increase their income potential with a college degree may take advantage of the center's math and reading tutoring services to assist them before or during their studies.

In addition to the teacher, the program's staff consists of a paid child care worker, a receptionist/child care assistant, a program assistant, and the program coordinator. Participants also assist with the day-to-day operations of the program by serving as office assistants and child care providers.

Accomplishments

The program has had an overwhelmingly positive impact on the surrounding community; over 700 people have been served since the beginning of the program. Over 100 people are served yearly for testing, counseling services, or referrals. Ninety-nine participants have graduated and received General Equivalency Diplomas. Thirty graduates have gone on for further education or training, while more than fifty graduates are now employed.

Funding

Funding is provided by the Albany County Department of Social Services and Job Training Partnership Act funds. Cornell Cooperative Extension also provides funds, with the Adult Learning Center paying for a teacher and classroom material. The center is a model of inter-agency collaboration; Head Start, Albany and Greene County Departments of Social Services, Albany County Health Department, and Food Stamps are among the agencies that work with the program in order to provide a community-based resource center. The agencies share resources in exchange for usage of the center's classroom; for example, Head Start has equipped the center's child care room.

Future Plans

The program plans to develop a vocational training program in order to broaden participants' job prospects.

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Greene County Community Action Agency, Inc.

Where

Greene County, New York

Mission

Located in the heart of New York's Catskills region, Greene County is almost entirely dependent on tourism for the health of its economy. Unfortunately, the region's once-thriving tourism trade is faltering, and now Greene County must cope with the effects that a contracting economy has upon its residents. Standing by to assist them is the Greene County Community Action Agency (GCCAA). This non-profit agency's goals are to help people remain independent through self-reliance and to promote commitment and empowerment for individuals, family and youth in order to recognize and remove the barriers that prevent them from becoming productive members of the community.

How

GCAA serves as an umbrella organization for a number of programs including Head Start, Community Services, Busy Bee Daycare, The Columbia-Greene Domestic Violence Program, the Senior Companion Program, and Rural Networking. These programs are staffed by a mix of full-time professionals and volunteers, and receive funding from a variety of state and federal sources.

Each program provides residents with services within a specific area. The Weatherization Program, for example, provides low-income homeowners with assistance in weather-proofing their homes for efficiency, safety, and comfort against the region's harsh winters. Staff conduct a comprehensive energy audit of an applicant's home, and funds are made available based on the audit.

The Domestic Violence Program provides victims with a number of services, including Shelter, Crisis Intervention, Individual and Group Counseling, Information and Referrals, and Advocacy on the Victim's behalf.

The Rural Networking program provides isolated mountain-top residents with more than ten service providers in one accessible location, including WIC, Domestic Violence counseling, and Public Health.

All services are provided to county residents free of charge. Programs such as Domestic Violence are provided with complete confidentiality, if so desired.

Accomplishments

Head Start, Community Services, a Home Weatherization Program for low-income homeowners, and programs that address Domestic Violence are just some of the services the agency has brought to county residents. One-hundred-and-eighty children have been served by the Head Start Program, and 507 victims of domestic violence have been offered help. The Home Weatherization program has made 125 houses more energy efficient.

Funding

Each program receives funding from a combination of state and federal sources. The Weatherization Program, for example, receives funding from the U. S. Department of Energy, and the Domestic Violence program receives funding from the Division of Youth and the United Way of Columbia County.

Future Plans

Future plans include a comprehensive study to determine how the agency can upgrade its services. The study will include strategies to cope with current and projected cutbacks in state and federal funding.

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NEW YORK FARMNET

Where

This program serves farm families throughout New York State.

Mission

A study conducted in 1993 by Mark Rank of Washington University and Tom Hirschl of Cornell University showed that participation in public assistance programs is significantly lower in rural populations than in urban populations, despite the fact that rural areas have higher rates of unemployment, underemployment, and long-term poverty than urban areas. Few groups are more affected by these difficulties than farm families, who must cope with the increased difficulty of maintaining a farm, coupled with isolation from local support services. New York FarmNet offers support to these families by providing them with access to information, a network of support services, and direct, individualized problem-solving consultation, all free of charge.

How

Through phone counsel, community referrals, printed resources, and direct one-on-one consulting, FarmNet enables families to identify problems, explore alternatives, and plan practical steps towards long-term resolution. The program offers farm families a toll-free number that connects them with a network of twenty community-based individuals called "FarmNet Consultants." These consultants, most of whom are retired extension workers or agricultural lenders, have extensive experience in farm finance, mediation, interpersonal communication, and crisis intervention.

Callers in 1994 sought information on a wide range of issues, ranging from environmental issues to family relations. Consultants meet with families within 24 hours of an initial call to FarmNet's 800 number. After meeting with the family to determine the full extent of their problem, the consultant helps them determine the best remedy for the problem. If the family has requested financial consultation, for example, the consultant will help them explore options such as cost control, crop diversification, enrollment in extension management courses, on or off-farm employment, or, selling the farm entirely and finding a different occupation. The family is under no obligation to follow the consultant's recommendations.

Accomplishments

During 1994, New York FarmNet experienced the second highest calling year since the program began in 1986. During the same year, FarmNet provided 1,463 on-farm consultations to 585 farming enterprises. Many of those enterprises have adopted better management techniques, crop diversification, or facilities expansion, and have become financially stronger as a result.

Funding

FarmNet's budget of approximately $100,000 is funded through the state Department of Agriculture and Markets and the Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, with additional support from Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Future Plans

An ever-increasing number of farmers deciding to leave farming altogether means increased demand for services such as employment training and financial stress management. To meet this demand, FarmNet plans to link farmers looking for a change of career with vocational training programs and offer more financial management assistance. The program also plans to develop more funding sources and increase its partnership with agricultural industry. Finally, to more accurately reflect its nature as a network of consultants helping farmers, the organization is changing its name to New York FarmNetwork.

Testimony

Roger Springstead and Kristine Hardy are among the thousands of farmers who've called FarmNet for advice.

"We called NY FarmNet because of money problems and a farm operation that had no room to grow," Springstead said. *"The consultant was wonderful! He spent hours with us and helped us a lot. Because of FarmNet's help, we have since moved to a great farm. Even after the move, the consultant visited us again and continued to give us great advice. We love New York FarmNet!"*

"New York FarmNet is a lifeline both financially and emotionally when there is no one else to turn to," Hardy said. *"They kept me from crumbling. I wouldn't be here today without them."*

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THE NEW YORK MAIN STREET ALLIANCE

Where

State of New York. The central offices are found in Mt. Kisco, NY.

Mission

The New York Main Street Alliance is a statewide, non-profit organization dedicated to downtown revitalization, preservation, and economic development. The Alliance's purpose is to provide New York State communities of all sizes with information, referrals, workshops, conferences, training, and technical assistance on successful "Main Street" revitalization.

How

By becoming a member of the New York Main Street Alliance, individuals and communities across the state can benefit from the services provided by The Alliance to "Main Streets," or central business districts and neighborhood commercial centers.

The Technical Assistance Center provides low cost, on-site consultations by staff and regional directors. These workshops can help launch a Main Street program or help to facilitate a Main Street revitalization planning process.

A Circuit Rider Program improves local capacity to develop and implement Main Street Revitalization programs in both rural and urban settings. It also provides staff assistance and training to members of the community.

Through membership, communities can access the growing statewide network of Main Street officials, practitioners, consultants, and other state, federal, and private non-profit resources. A toll-free Main Street Information telephone line also provides information about community revitalization.

A quarterly newsletter, *Mainstreet New York*, shares timely information on legislation, programs, and funding affecting New York's downtown communities. The newsletter also offers strategies, ideas, and resources available for successful Main Street revitalization.

A Managers Training Institute educates community leaders and provides valuable resources. Services offered through this training include information on community organizing, historic preservation, marketing and promotion, tourism and local economic development, urban and rural design, and zoning and land use.

Accomplishments

Since its formation in 1991, The Alliance has seen great success. The Alliance has assisted numerous communities with on-site visits conducted through its Technical Assistance Center. It has also sponsored Circuit Rider programs in the Catskill Mountain region, the Staten Island area, Queens, and in the New York Southern Tier region. These programs have served rural communities as well as development corporations with staff and revitalization assistance.

The Main Street Managers Training Institute has become an annual event, and regional workshops have addressed unique Main Street needs in different areas of the state.

Through its newsletter and other publications and videos, The Alliance has provided ideas, resources, and encouragement for community leaders across New York State.

Funding

The Alliance receives funds and support primarily from membership dues. There are five membership categories. The "Sponsor" membership is for individuals, organizations, or corporations substantially supporting The Alliance. The "Corporate" membership is available to for-profit companies directly involved with Main Street revitalization and economic development. Government agencies, non-profit organizations and individuals also have membership categories.

Future Plans

In addition to increasing the number of services available to members, The Alliance is also looking to expand its services to more communities across the state, and hopes to send two employees to western New York to work with eight rural communities.

Testimony

"The Alliance is playing a very important role in helping rejuvenate the downtowns throughout New York State by providing technical assistance, workshops, and newsletters. The on-site technical assistance was invaluable to Medina."

— Catherine Revelas, Executive Director, Medina Area Chamber of Commerce

"Lake George has benefited from the advice, criticism, and direction provided by The Alliance. We are looking forward to implementing many of their recommendations."

— Robert Blais, Mayor, Village of Lake George

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THE NEW YORK SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE WORKING GROUP

Where

Statewide consortium based in Rochester, NY. It shares the staff of the (non-profit) Politics of Food Program, Inc., its fiduciary agent.

Mission

The New York Sustainable Agriculture Working Group seeks to create a sustainable environment in which farmers and communities are able to bring quality local food to all.

How

The NY Sustainable Agriculture Working Group works from many perspectives to turn around the decline of farms, farming, and farmland in New York State, and to make a more sustainable food system for the state. The Group defines sustainable agriculture as a food system that is environmentally sound and economically viable for all partners, from farmer to consumer. It produces safe, nutritious food in a humane and socially just way, obtaining as much of that food from the region as possible. Sustainable food systems use renewable resources to increase local independence and return investment to the local community.

The Group works in coalition building to bring together farm, environmental, consumer, farmworker, faith, anti-poverty, and labor groups. They have a platform that sets forth the problems and offers the criteria for building a better food system.

The Group is also heavily involved in advocacy of better food and farming systems. They bring people together in meetings, visit legislators, use a telephone tree for communication, and write letters promoting policies that will make the system more sustainable. Policies that are active currently include a "circuit breaker" bill lessening the tax burden on farmers. The Group is also addressing the Rural Revitalization Bill, which would expand farmers markets and offer economic development aid to rural areas.

Workshops, speakers, conferences, a quarterly newsletter, and the Resource Library housed in Rochester, are also used as educational tools.

Empowerment programs are another useful tool that the Group is using to help farmers and the rural poor. Used in both urban and rural settings, the programs work to bring farmworkers and the urban poor into decision-making within their coalition. Urban poor are taken to farms to make linkages, and also to help the struggling farms. Organic produce is brought to the city through these linkages, and farm stands have been set up so that the urban communities may have quality produce at a fair price.

Accomplishments

The Group has worked for years to aid farmers and communities in promoting their goods. It has created positive linkages between farmers and urban people. The participants have gained greater self-sufficiency and self-confidence. The Group has also caused changes in policy through their efforts and advocacy. Bills are currently being passed to help rural poor areas in New York State. The Group has also worked to educate the consumers of New York to buy locally and seasonally, therefore benefiting the farmers of the state. Lastly, a strong partnership has been built with Cornell University, and more stakeholders outside that system are welcome to be a part of direction and decision-making. "Our track record has been good," says Alison Clarke, coordinator. "We've become a celebrated educational activity, and look forward to continued success."

Funding

A portion of funding is received from membership dues. The public is given a chance to join, and an opportunity to direct their gifts to various efforts of the Group. The Group also receives grants and support from foundations as well as individuals.

Future Plans

The NY Sustainable Agriculture Working Group is always looking for programs and projects that will benefit local farmers and communities. Currently, the Group is focusing on the advocacy concerns of their projects. They hope to bring low-income persons into their group of farm, environmental, consumer, and farm worker labor groups. By including the farm workers and rural and urban poor, the Group hopes to form an advisory group. This advisory group would focus on building community food security where all people have sufficient, quality, acceptable food.

Also, the Group is working constantly with the legislation mentioned above, to improve the lives of farmers and farmworkers in the state. Clearly, if passed, these movements would make a tremendous difference for New York farmers.

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OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHENANGO

Where

Chenango County, Upstate New York

Mission

In addition to providing emergency services and programs for families in need (13% of area families currently live below the poverty line), the agency's mission is to reduce the local poverty rate through family and community development.

These and other services are all part of Opportunities for Chenango's comprehensive mission to help local families and individuals not just survive, but to aid them in developing their abilities so they can attain economic self-sufficiency—and the self-respect that goes with it.

How

To accomplish its mission, Opportunities for Chenango provides services and programs for all ages, including children and youth, adults, and senior citizens. Services range from pre-school programs such as Head Start, to case management for at-risk youth, to job training for low-income adults.

The agency also helps make possible two facilities, The Care Center and The Children's Center, that provide assistance and services for Chenango County's residents. The Care Center provides food, clothing, and shelter assistance to area families who have fallen on hard times. The Children's Center provides day care services for area children.

The services that helped Connie (last name withheld for confidentiality) make the transition from welfare dependency to self-sufficiency include those provided by the Board of Cooperative Educational Services, an umbrella organization of local school districts. A computer seminar offered by the program helped familiarize Connie with computers and sparked her interest in a career in word processing. This led her to enroll in a local business school, from which she's since graduated. In the meantime, Opportunities for Chenango staff helped get her four-year old son into day care, which relieved Connie of the burden of worrying about him while she was away. Additionally, programs and services such as Women, Infants, and Children, the Home Energy Assistance Program, and Section 8 Rental Assistance helped her make ends meet while she was in school.

Accomplishments

Being a single mother with four children and no job skills made the goal of survival, let alone economic self-sufficiency, a constant struggle for Connie. However, thanks in part to the help provided by Opportunities for Chenango, Connie's dream of achieving financial independence is becoming a reality.

Formerly dependent on welfare and minimum-wage factory jobs to support her family, Connie now works as a secretary at an insurance agency and hopes to become a claims representative in the near future.

"I am starting to be able to support my own family, and it is a very nice feeling," Connie said.

Connie is just one of many area residents who has utilized such programs as Head Start, Section 8 housing, bus transportation, child care, and after-school activities.

Funding

Opportunities for Chenango operates with support from both public and private sources. State and federal funding pays for programs such as Women, Infants, and Children, Head Start, and the Home Energy Assistance Program. Private donations and volunteer support make programs such as Literacy Volunteers and the Water Heater Replacement Program possible.

Future Plans

Connie's story is one that Opportunities for Chenango is working to duplicate many times over. Toward this end, the agency has joined forces with local businesses, government, and education agencies to help create an Economic Development Zone within Chenango County.

"The Economic Development Zone encompasses three municipalities within Chenango county," says Jack Salo, director of planning and development for Opportunities for Chenango. *"It's a state program that offers incentives such as income tax relief for businesses that relocate to the area or expand their facilities."*

The partnership that was forged between Opportunities for Chenango, other governmental agencies, and private businesses during the application process for the Economic Development Zone is one that the agency wishes to continue. Local businesses, for example, have teamed up with the agency to make facilities such as The Childrens' Center and programs such as job training for at-risk youth a reality.

"We aim to get the whole community working together by avoiding compartmentalization," Salo says. *"Programs and agencies need to look at themselves as a means to help people achieve a better life, rather than as ends in themselves. That way we can develop a more holistic approach to solving problems and helping people."*

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RURAL OPPORTUNITIES, INC.

Where

Based in Rochester, NY, Rural Opportunities, Inc. offers its services to rural individuals in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and New York through thirty-four year-round and nineteen seasonal program offices.

Mission

The purpose of Rural Opportunities, Inc. is to improve the quality of life for marginally employed farmworkers, and other economically disadvantaged people through self-help services, affordable housing development, and advocacy.

How

Founded in 1969, Rural Opportunities is a regional, private, non-profit community development corporation devoted to helping disadvantaged migrant and seasonal farmworkers, as well as other rural poor. Rural Opportunities helps the rural poor gain access to economic, educational, social and political resources for betterment of their lives and communities. Rural Opportunities is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of farmworkers, human service organizations, and affiliate corporation representatives.

Several programs help to create positive change for the farmworkers and rural poor. Adult training and employment programs test participants for employment interests, provide counseling in their area of interest, and arrange on the job training. Participants are then placed in a suitable job, and participate in follow-up services with a Rural Opportunities counselor.

Area farmworkers are also offered Adult Education programs including Adult Basic Education (math and English) and English as a Second Language (speaking and writing for migrant workers). Participants may also improve existing job skills through the Work Place Literacy program.

Health and Safety programs offer education, training, and health care to farmworkers. Rural Opportunities employers teach farm equipment safety and substance abuse prevention. Farmworkers are also educated in AIDS awareness, and are taught how to prepare nutritious meals.

A large number of programs are devoted to housing development. Rural Opportunities provides technical assistance to rehabilitate and construct affordable housing for farmworkers, the homeless, first-time home buyers, rural families, and senior citizens. Five counties in New York are offered a rent subsidy program. Counseling services are offered in dealing with mortgages, and a weatherization program is active in Monroe County, NY. Rural Opportunities also directly manages residential and commercial properties.

Rural Opportunities participates in Economic Development of western New York through the Rural Venture Fund. This fund makes available loans up to $25,000 and technical assistance to small businesses in this area of New York.

There are various programs and services available for farmworkers' children. Migrant Head Start centers are operating in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. Rural Opportunities also offers child abuse prevention, parent involvement, and family support programs.

Accomplishments

Adult Employment programs and services provided training to 875 participants from July 1993 to June 1994. Of these, 411 were placed into employment. Since 1983, the Adult Employment program has served more than 53,000 participants.

Through the Housing Development and Property Management services, 418 multi-family units have been developed, purchased, or are currently under construction. Rural Opportunities presently manages 177 residential units and two commercial office buildings at ten different sites across New York State, as well as seven units in Arendtsville, PA. Since its start in 1981, the Housing Development program has created and completed 930 housing units, at a cost of $41,567,000.

In 1994, the Migrant Head Start program enrolled 199 children in New Jersey, 191 children in Pennsylvania, and 506 children in Ohio, and from July 1993 to June 1994, 34,599 people received services from the Health and Safety programs.

Funding

Rural Opportunities receives funds through grants and contracts from several programs and works with an annual operating budget of approximately $12,000,000.

Future Plans

Through the creation of a 5-year Strategic Plan, the Board of Directors along with the Senior Program Management Staff has outlined six key success factors. Each of these factors have multiple action steps to help Rural Opportunities enter the year 2000 with streamlined coordination of resources, a broader financial base, and better use of volunteers and staff.

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THE RURAL PARENTING INITIATIVE PROGRAM

Where

Deposit, NY (30 miles east of Binghamton)

Mission

The goal of The Rural Parenting Initiative Program is to keep families together by helping to prevent problems resulting from high stress. Through kind and compassionate support, the Program hopes to help families strengthen their relationships with one another by building on their own strengths.

How

The Rural Parenting Initiative Program is a prevention program for Deposit families housed in the Deposit Family Care Center. The Deposit Family Care Center operates under the guidance of the United Health Services Hospitals Health Care System.

By recognizing that parenting is hard work, the Program assists families who may, without caring intervention, be at risk of social services involvement. Common problems include strained parent/child relationships, discipline problems, marital conflict, financial worries, and alcohol/substance abuse by a family member. The Program realizes that any of these problems can make coping with normal daily stress even more difficult for all family members.

The Program works through the Deposit Family Care Center to provide a variety of services. One service offered to families is the LIFE Parenting workshop. This workshop, a program of Cornell Cooperative Extension, is an 8-week series of weekly meetings that provide basic parenting skills to parents. These workshops provide information about child development, alternatives to corporal punishment, and effective parenting strategies. Through the professional facilitator, parents are provided with linkages to other services in the community and a place where they can freely discuss difficulties in raising their children. Transportation and free child care is provided for the workshop participants.

The Program also offers individual and family counseling, crisis intervention, and support groups for all ages through the Center. All the services offered through the Deposit Family Care Center are provided by a full-time certified social worker and a part-time social worker. Support groups, counseling, and crisis intervention are offered at the Center, and Parenting workshops are held at various locations in the community. In order to increase access to services not available in Deposit, transportation assistance is provided.

Anyone may call the Center to request services. Referrals are encouraged from school personnel, community agencies, clergy, social service workers, and from family members themselves. Most insurance including Medicaid is accepted, and a reduced fee is available to those who qualify.

Accomplishments

Since its beginning in January of 1994, the Rural Parenting Initiative Program has served many families and helped them to become more successful. According to contact Nancy McGraw, The Program's biggest accomplishment has been in "*keeping families together. We do this by enhancing communication and coping skills to assist families in being able to creatively solve problems which previously seemed overwhelming to them.*" The Program provided an average of 600 hours of counseling time to families in 1995 through its part-time social worker. The Program also teaches around forty families each year to work cooperatively and solve problems in a healthy way. One example is that of a single mother caring for six children. The mother was an alcoholic, and the children were in danger of being sent into foster homes. Through the services of The Program, the mother has attended treatment programs and counseling services, and the family has been able to stay together. This was an additional success for The Program, because the family was living in a very rural area where it was difficult to reach them with services and programs.

Funding

At its start in 1994, the Rural Parenting Initiative Program was funded through a grant from the United Way of Broome County, New York. The initial grant was offered for the period of one year, and The Program received the grant for a second year (a very rare occurrence for the particular grant offered). The Program has not received funding from this grant in 1996, but has kept going through the help of the United Health Services Hospitals funds.

Future Plans

The Rural Parenting Initiative Program plans to continue the LIFE Parenting classes, and hopes to add a new support group for parents of teenagers. The incidents of violence and substance abuse among New York teenagers have risen in number, and The Program hopes that through this new preventive program, parents will be able to work with their teenagers and help them to overcome these problems.

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The South Central New York Resource Conservation and Development Project, Inc.

Where

Based in Norwich, NY, the South Central New York Resource Conservation and Development Project, Inc. (SoCNY RC&D) serves Broome, Cayuga, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware, Madison, Onondaga, Otsego, Schoharie, Sullivan, Tioga, and Tompkins county.

Mission

The mission of SoCNY RC&D is to "improve the region's rural economic development climate through the wise use of available natural resources."

How

SoCNY RC&D is a leader in natural resource conservation and rural economic development activities in the Central and Southern Tier regions of rural New York State. The SoCNY RC&D program is administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service and receives administrative support from the USDA.

The goals and objectives of the SoCNY RC&D include: 1) Retention and expansion of the number of farms, farmers, and acres of farmland; 2) Improved forestry resource management/ marketing and utilization; and 3) Greater public awareness of the value of natural resources.

Specialty committees are formed to help residents working in different areas. Examples include: 1) the Forestry Committee, which aids the forest industry and landowners in forest management, and increases the general public's awareness of the forestry industry; 2) the Grassland Committee, which promotes the adoption of rotational grazing systems; 3) the Livestock Committee, which promotes growth in the region's livestock industry and makes productive use of idle farmland; and 4) the Pastured Poultry Committee, which provides a high quality poultry product to consumers through the use of existing family farm resources.

The SoCNY RC&D also offers the opportunity to join a nationwide volunteer service group called The Earth Team. Available to those age 16 and older, the group offers volunteers a chance to gain professional experience, receive training, earn academic credit, work on conservation activities, and help conserve natural resources for future generations.

County residents also have the opportunity to rent farming equipment such as scales, corrals, tractors, and mowers from the SoCNY RC&D project offices.

An example project is the Pastured Poultry Initiative, begun in March, 1994. An effort to start small pastured poultry enterprises throughout the region, the Initiative has fostered seven known producers in the region. These producers began operations during the spring of 1995, and have produced a total of 3,000 chickens. The naturally-raised broilers are processed on-farm and are sold to local customers, thus promoting low production costs and direct marketing.

Accomplishments

Previously only available to residents in eleven rural New York counties, the SoCNY RC&D area expanded to Cayuga County in 1995. RC&D staff see this as a beneficial addition, and look forward to the many positive outcomes from opening the program up to new areas.

During the 1995 season, ten projects were completed by SoCNY RC&D. The projects dealt with topics such as agricultural production, marketing and education, recreation, and forestry. Some of these projects included: Beef Herd Improvement, Grazing Support, Small Ruminant Stocking, Pasture Renovation, No-Till Services, Livestock Marketing, the Pastured Poultry Initiative, and the CADE Meat Goat Marketing Study. In 1994, thirteen such projects were completed.

During 1995, approximately 380 volunteer hours were recorded during the years' activities. Public relations also improved for SoCNY RC&D during 1994. Over forty news releases were published about the RC&D programs; the conservation message was shared with over 2,000 students; and several radio programs were broadcast dealing with livestock and other SoCNY RC&D topics.

Funding

Funding and support is typically obtained from federal, state, and county sources, as well as from private foundations and organizations supporting similar objectives to those of SoCNY RC&D.

Future Plans

The SoCNY RC&D is constantly working on new projects to help the rural communities of New York State.

One project is aimed at delivering conservation education to elementary age students. Initiated with the help of the New York Beef Industry Council and two other RC&D councils, this program will educate students on the role that livestock farmers and others play in caring for our natural resources.

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TEEN ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

Where

The program focuses on teenagers across New York State, particularly in rural areas.

Mission

Frequently, parents, school personnel, and policy-makers cannot believe that research results apply to their children. The drug use, despair, sexual activity and other negative experiences revealed among some teenage youth are often thought to be "big city" problems. But, as important partners in the Teen Assessment Program, communities uncover and embrace solid evidence of both the problems faced and support needed by their youth.

The Teen Assessment Program is a university-community partnership that involves Cornell Cooperative Extension staff, community leaders and educators, and teenage youth in research that focuses on teens. The ultimate goal of this partnership is to embrace and act upon research findings to make communities better places for youth.

How

Facilitated by Cornell Cooperative Extension, the Teen Assessment Program features a local steering committee in each county that participates in nearly every aspect of the TAP process and provides input into the research survey. Committees are representative of the community, and youth involvement is strongly encouraged.

The actual surveys are administered within schools by teachers or trained personnel. The surveys cover topics such as alcohol use, pregnancy and sexual experiences, teen suicide and violence, child abuse, and identifies whom teens turn to for support. No student is required to participate, and parents are notified of the survey in advance and may elect not to have their children participate in the survey. Students do not sign or write their names on surveys, and researchers are careful to delete from completed surveys any detail that might reveal an individual's identity.

After survey results are electronically scanned, the data is sent to the Cornell Institute for Social and Economic Research, where data analysis and summaries are compiled for the county's use. County data is aggregated, but individual school information is sent to school administrators. The aggregated data is used by the county for reports, newsletters to families, grant proposals, public policy efforts, and program development.

Accomplishments

The Teen Assessment Program is creating a massive bank of data pertaining to teens that eventually will allow researchers, parents, teachers and policy makers to learn more about youth and issues that concern them.

Some school administrators have chosen to share their school-specific data with students, school personnel and the local community. In Broome County, students from one school district generated their own report from the data and did a formal presentation to the faculty and the school board. In Cayuga County, a rural high school used the survey results to plan a series of workshops addressing sexual behavior, substance abuse, mental health, and parent-child relationships. The NY-Penn Health Systems Agency, a regional health planning organization, has used the data to delve deeper into youth-related health issues as they undertake long-range planning.

Funding

A start-up grant for the program was provided by Cornell University. Current funding for the project is provided through the state's Division for Youth and county youth bureaus; Cooperative Extension funds pay the salaries of extension workers involved in the program.

Testimony

"These surveys are valuable because they're locally produced and controlled," said Herb Engman, senior extension associate. *"Too many studies on teens are based on urban students. These surveys provide more local information than national studies, and they force communities to face realities about their kids and to use the results to make changes and adopt strategies."*

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Two Plus Four Construction Company

Where

State of New York, central office in East Syracuse, NY.

Mission

Two Plus Four Construction Company (Two Plus Four) is heavily involved in rural housing development, and is constantly advocating opportunities for rural housing throughout New York State. Two Plus Four is dedicated to creating high quality products despite limited budgets. The company endeavors daily to create low cost, low maintenance housing with a high degree of quality.

How

The Two Plus Four Construction Company has been in the business of housing development and construction for over twenty years. They work with non-profit organizations, local housing authorities, and private developers to create quality housing across the State of New York.

Two Plus Four works with approximately five to ten projects each year. With their experienced staff, Two Plus Four is able to work on multiple jobs at the same time, and because some of the staff own projects themselves, they respect the importance of scheduling a project, providing quality craftsmanship, and accounting for the ongoing maintenance needs of a project. These factors are always kept in mind when Two Plus Four is working on a project.

Two Plus Four is primarily a construction company, and is ready to provide masonry, concrete, and carpentry work. The company also can provide various development services to its clients. Two Plus Four aids in exploration of funding sources, complete loan packages, site and market analysis, and assistance with community approvals. Two Plus Four can also provide architectural and engineering services, formation of limited partnerships, project syndication, and project management. Two Plus Four can be the builder, as well as an active partner in any construction enterprise.

The staff of Two Plus Four consists of individuals with years of experience in the construction industry. These individuals are dedicated to making every effort in accommodating the interests of projects and organizations seeking construction work.

Accomplishments

In the past twenty years, the Two Plus Four Construction Company has built over one hundred projects, ranging from six units to 124 units per project. These projects have given homes to families, single parent families, the elderly, rehabilitation patients, HIV patients, and the handicapped. Thousands of people have benefited from the efforts of Two Plus Four in receiving quality housing from the company. Two Plus Four works to provide the best for many rural families, even when working with a low-budget project. The American dream of having a home has come true for many people through the efforts of Two Plus Four Construction.

Funding

Two Plus Four works extensively with support from various trust funds, banks, and state programs. Various sources have funded their projects, including the Farmer Home Administration, Housing and Urban Development, New York State Turnkey, New York State Housing Trust Fund, New York Affordable Housing, bonds, and private banks. Two Plus Four also has extensive experience with the Low Income Tax Credit Program.

Future Plans

Two Plus Four is confident in the success of its program. It takes great pride in what it's accomplished in the past, and expects to continue to build in this habit of success. As long as there are programs to build for, Two Plus Four will continue to build.

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THE WORKER OWNERSHIP RESOURCE CENTER

Where

Ten counties of the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions of New York State. The administrative office for the Finger Lakes region is in Geneva, NY. The Southern Tier office is in Elmira, NY. Worker Ownership Resource Center training programs are held in these two areas, as well as in Waterloo in Seneca County (for Seneca County residents only), in Addison in Steuben County, and in Rochester.

Mission

The Worker Ownership Resource Center is a non-profit community economic development agency dedicated to empowering economically disadvantaged individuals to participate more fully in their local economies through the creation of business enterprises.

How

The Center began in 1991 as an organization formed to promote the establishment of worker-owned cooperatives. In 1992, the focus shifted to community and micro-enterprise development.

The Center offers 6 to 12 week long training programs. These programs cover the essentials of formulating a business plan, including feasibility, marketing, operations, record keeping, and business finances.

Clients meet weekly for one-on-one consultations with a counselor. Here, the client receives individualized counseling on the issues particular to his or her specific business and situation. After clients complete their training, they return to The Center for peer support meetings. During these meetings, the clients provide mutual support and discuss the issues affecting their businesses.

Those clients who complete The Center's training program may qualify for access to small loans. Loan amounts are initially up to $5,000, lent at a prime rate and the clients have two years to pay the loan off. Second-time borrowers with good repayment records can borrow additional amounts up to $10,000.

The Center also offers other services, such as mentoring and business workshops.

Accomplishments

The Center has offered twenty-three training programs since its beginning. Over three hundred participants have graduated from these programs. Out of those 300 graduates, 94 businesses and 106 business owners have received start-up or expansion assistance. The Center has granted a total of twenty-two loans, in the total amount of $95,900. The average loan size per participant is $4,360.

Funding

The Center was initially established with a grant from the Catholic Church's Campaign for Human Development, with additional funding from the Diocese of Rochester. Since that time, additional grant funding has come from the USDA Rural Economic and Community Development Program; the Entrepreneurial Assistance Program of the N.Y.S. Department of Economic Development; Community Development Block Grants from the City of Geneva, the City of Elmira, the Village of Addison, and Seneca County; the Appalachian Regional Commission; the John Merck Fund through the New York Community Trust; the Empire State Development Corporation; and the Federal Office of Refugee Relocation through the N.Y.S. Department of Social Services.

Future Plans

According to Executive Director Kevin Hennessy, "The Center is attempting to develop a network of micro-enterprises focused on the specialty foods area. The Center is also investigating the possibility of working with home health care enterprises. Although only in its beginning stages, Hennessy feels confident of the success of this project, since it builds on the success of existing projects.

Testimony

Micro-enterprise opportunities should be an available option for those struggling to get out of poverty," says Hennessy. He feels that the programs have been successful in helping low-income people reach their goal of working out of poverty.

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PENNSYLVANIA

PA

Pathways from Poverty Team

Accomplishments

The Pennsylvania Pathways from Poverty Team has reached several conclusions since the conference last fall. It has recognized that in order for rural Pennsylvanians to climb out of poverty, a number of factors must be recognized and implemented. First, the team has concluded that fewer resources, especially financial resources, will be available to rural communities as they seek to expand economic opportunities for their citizens. As a result, the team believes that communities will have to be more innovative than ever. Second, the team recognizes the fact that poverty cannot be dealt with in isolation. The team believes that communities must simultaneously deal with economic and community development, education, health care, and other issues in a comprehensive fashion as they seek to expand their own opportunities. Lastly, the team realizes that a greater effort must be made to provide communities with the tools they need to identify opportunity-building strategies. The team has identified several tools which they believe will be helpful to these communities. These include information resources, community empowerment training, community assessment tools, peer mentoring, strategy sharing, specialized forums, removing institutional barriers to community empowerment, and developing community councils and other informal empowerment structures. The team hopes that in the development of these strategies and tools, rural residents of Pennsylvania will be able to improve their communities and therefore improve their lives.

The Pennsylvania Pathways Team has developed various committees to create programs that implement these strategies and tools. Much of the preliminary work will be done by the team's steering committee, but the other committees will be responsible for creating programs to address the problems of the rural poor.

Future Plans

The Pennsylvania Pathways Team looks to the future as an opportunity for developing and implementing helpful strategies in the battle against poverty. Once these strategies are developed, the team plans to test them in target communities. The team also looks to include these effective strategies in a manual or workbook that rural communities can use to guide their efforts. The team also plans to build a network of individuals and organizations that will provide service to communities as they work to improve themselves. This database will be extremely helpful to the communities as a source of contacts and information.

Follow-Up Seed Grant Funds

The Pennsylvania Pathways from Poverty Team has requested approximately $1,100 from the Northeast Center. This money was requested for room rentals, meal costs, telephone/fax use, and mailing costs for the expanded group meeting the team held in November of 1995.

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Community Education Council of Elk and Cameron Counties

Where

The Community Education Council is based in St. Marys, PA, and serves the primarily rural counties of Elk and Cameron in northwestern Pennsylvania.

Mission

The Community Education Council serves as the only outlet for higher education in an area that is without even a community college. The Council also works with private businesses to meet the specialized needs of the area's manufacturing-based economy, which is concentrated in the powdered metal, carbon, and powder metal-related industries. The Council helps local employees improve their skills and move ahead in the workplace by providing courses in subjects directly related to the specific industry in which they work.

How

Many classes are provided through Penn State and the University of Pittsburgh, the state's two largest state-related universities. The Council coordinates the course offerings of Penn State Dubois and Pitt-Bradford, the schools' nearest branch campuses.

The Council serves the area in other ways as well, offering General Education Diploma training, literacy and basic education classes, and non-credit classes. The Council also works to make higher education accessible to residents by providing information about Pennsylvania colleges and universities, on financial aid, as well as answering questions commonly asked by prospective students.

The Council keeps costs down by using existing resources whenever possible. Local school districts provide free classroom space in their buildings, and local instructors teach many of its industry-related courses and seminars, thereby avoiding the relatively high tuition charged for such courses by the two state-related universities. The Council shares office space with the Chamber of Commerce and relies on brochures, posted announcements, and word of mouth (often the best advertising) to publicize its services.

Accomplishments

Judging by the enrollment numbers alone, the program is a success. Since the program began in 1992, enrollment has increased from 0 to 1700 students during the '94-95 school year, all of them part-time. Many of the students are what program director Deborah Dick Pontzer refers to as "underemployed."

"We concentrate on people who are working, but want a better job," she said. *"Many of our students are single mothers. We've helped them go from working in convenience stores to becoming registered nurses, for example."*

Although it's not an accredited institution, the Council has been able to parallel many of the services of a community college by offering courses and seminars in subjects such as Quality Management, Geometric Measuring and Tolerancing, and Computer Programming. Enrolling in these courses has led to promotions and bonuses for employees of local industries, and immediate job opportunities for other students.

Another success story is the Council's partnership with the business community. By keeping in touch with area businesses, the Council is able to keep abreast of their needs and offer training in the latest management and operations techniques, as well as match training with good jobs that are locally available. Many local companies pay 100% of the tuition for their employees to attend the courses and seminars pertaining to these areas, with some companies offering bonuses for employees who receive an 'A' in a course. Others receive promotions after taking the courses. Such tangible benefits have helped persuade more people to enroll in courses.

Future Plans

Community support is a vital component of the Council's future plans. The program's rapid growth has resulted in an immediate need for state-of-the art equipment such as a chemistry lab and a materials testing lab. To fulfill these goals, the Council has embarked on a local fundraising program that has raised over $200,000 to date.

Testimony

Pontzer says that one of the most important lessons she has learned is to stop being an "educational elitist."

"I used to think that everyone needed at least an associate's degree," said Pontzer, who has an MBA herself and used to work for a "Big Six" accounting firm. *"I've learned since then that for some people, a certificate can be just as useful."*

Pontzer has learned that lesson by doing what she maintains is the most important thing a community leader needs to do: listen.

"You have to listen to what the people in the community are saying," Pontzer said. *"That way you'll be able to design programs that will best meet their needs."*

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CORNERSTONE CARE, INC.

Where

Serving Greene and Fayette counties in Southwestern Pennsylvania, Cornerstone Care, Inc. (CCI) has an administrative office in Greensboro, PA, and a new office in Rogersville, PA.

Mission

The goal of CCI is to provide community-based, comprehensive, preventive and primary health services to under-served populations. CCI provides an effective system of services so that children get the help they need to grow into happy, healthy, and productive adults.

How

Cornerstone Care is a non-profit organization established in 1977. It was incorporated originally as the Southeastern Greene Community Health Center, and was established to serve the community with comprehensive, convenient, high quality, ambulatory health care. It was organized by a group of concerned local citizens, and was created to fill a medical service void in the area.

CCI provides many services to the residents of Greene and Fayette counties. Among these are dental care, medical care, and psychological and counseling services. Along with these services, community residents may receive obstetrical/gynecological services, podiatry services, and audiology services.

CCI employs 3 family practice physicians, 1 internal medicine physician, 3 physician assistants, 2 dentists, and 5 part-time psychologists, social workers, and audiologists. There are also 37 various support and administrative staff.

Besides offering its own services, CCI is recognized as "a new way of doing business" in social services, by providing a place in the community where families can come together for information, support, and services provided by many different organizations including WIC and Head Start.

Because of increased demands for services, CCI has recruited additional physicians, expanded services in the evenings and weekends, and added facilities. The Rogersville office expanded by adding a 3,000 square foot addition to its facility in September of 1995.

CCI offers additional services such as prenatal care, health education, family planning, prescription assistance, literacy programs, job training, and family outreach programs. It receives significant support from the communities it serves, and offers quality services to the residents. Recently, Administrator Robert Mt. Joy received the Benjamin Rush Award for Outstanding Health Services by the Greene County Medical Society. Clearly, CCI is a great value to the people of Greene and Fayette counties.

Accomplishments

CCI has worked since 1977 to provide quality care to families of Greene and Fayette counties, many of whom can be described as at-risk. It has steadily faced the responsibility of reaching the unreached, and has built up a nineteen-year history of excellence in service.

In 1995, CCI provided services to 6,273 medical and 1,492 dental patients, with a total of 21,620 patient visits in the various services it offers.

With its expansion to the Rogersville office in September of 1992, CCI accomplished a great task in reaching out and expanding its services. This expansion is even more admirable because it was completed without the funding support of CCI's parent funding source.

Funding

CCI receives the majority of its funds from payments of its patients, through Medicaid, Medicare, private insurance, or personal funds. It also receives funding from several governmental agencies and federal funding from the Public Health Service. Special projects funding also comes from the Pennsylvania Department of Health and various other private and public organizations.

Future Plans

CCI is dedicated to providing quality care to all of its patients, and will continue to do so. It has made a broader commitment to the community despite a shrinking base of federal funding support, yet the future looks bright for CCI.

Cornerstone Care looks forward to the implementation of two new community health promotion/disease prevention projects. The Women 50+ Program (a breast and cervical cancer early detection program), and BEE WISE IMMUNIZE (a child immunization program). It looks forward to serving even more people in 1996 and is excited about its expansion to Rogersville.

CCI is also looking ahead to adding new services, whenever the need arrives. New liaisons will be formed in the future for an even stronger base of support.

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FAMILY SELF SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM

Where

Indiana County, Pennsylvania

Mission

The program helps low-income, single parents become productive, self-sufficient members of the community. By emphasizing a personal "plan of action" and using existing human service agencies and programs, the Family Self Sufficiency program helps participants help themselves along the pathway from poverty.

How

Begun as one of the Homeownership and Opportunity for People Everywhere (HOPE) initiatives enacted in the National Affordable Housing Act of 1990, the program currently involves twenty-five Indiana County families who live in rent-subsidized housing and receive welfare. A letter detailing the program is sent out to prospective participants, who must respond in writing to be considered for the program and are selected through a lottery system.

Once selected, participants meet with case managers to outline a series of goals (economic, educational, and financial) that will be included in the "Contract of Participation," a written agreement between the participant and the Indiana County Housing Authority. The contract specifies the services and assistance that will be available to the participants and the responsibilities that each participant must fulfill as part of the program. Through the contract, the participants agree to fulfill their goals within a 5-year period.

"The advantages of this program are that the participants are linked with a case manager who will work with them on a long-term basis to direct them to available resources," says Bonnie Dunlap, chair of Indiana County Department of Human Services and coordinator of the program.

Available resources include: Child Care, Job Training and Referral, Drug and Alcohol Treatment, Parenting Skills and Household Management Workshops, Transportation, and Health Education. Participants also are eligible for escrow accounts that will provide them with a lump sum to do with as they wish once the program is completed. If a participant's rent is raised because their income level rises while they're in the program, for example, the money is put into their escrow account and given to them once the five years are up. Professionals from the county's human service agencies serve as volunteer case managers and are trained by Dunlap before taking a case.

Accomplishments

Among the program's success stories are those of Sonya Clemons and Judith Vinson. Both are single mothers who are participating in the program. Clemons, a divorced mother of three teenagers who now works at a J.C. Penney's hair salon, said, *"the program gets you moving in the right direction and lets you know there's a light down the road somewhere."*

Vinson, a divorced mother with two young children, currently attends a community college, where she is studying computer electronics. *"The program is a fine opportunity to help get you on your own,"* she said. *"The program is a good one, and is helping people who wouldn't normally have a chance to get help on their own."*

Both Clemons and Vinson have goals for the future. Clemons hopes to open her own hair salon, and Vinson intends to find a job in computer repair.

Funding

The program is funded through the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, along with funds from the state.

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THE EXPANDED FOOD AND NUTRITION PROGRAM

Where

Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Programs (EFNEP) are found in every state in America, as well as in all US territories. The EFNEP program profiled here is the program for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Mission

EFNEP teaches low-income families, especially those with young children, how they can have a healthy diet using limited resources. EFNEP provides food and nutrition education to homemakers, pregnant teens, and youth from rural and urban communities. EFNEP is a people-oriented program. Pennsylvania families enrolled in EFNEP don't get a handout; they receive guidance along the path to better nutrition and greater self-sufficiency.

How

Eating a nutritious diet is difficult when little money is available for food. Poor diets may lead to poor health and other problems too. Nutrition education advisers are hired from within the community and are trained and supervised by extension home economists. Volunteers also play an important role in adult, youth, and pregnant teen programs. Trained EFNEP staff help homemakers and youth acquire knowledge and skills necessary to change their attitudes and behavior and improve the diets of themselves and their families. Topics may include stretching food dollars, planning and preparing healthy meals, feeding babies and children, storing food safely, reading food labels, and using food stamps and other resources effectively.

EFNEP's *Eating For A Better Start* curriculum targets pregnant teens. Lessons cover the discomforts of pregnancy, weight gain, fetal development, the nutrient needs of the pregnant teen, the dangers of substance abuse, breast and formula feeding, and introducing solid foods to infants. *Eating For A Better Start* is teaching both adult and youth EFNEP clients. The primary audience is the pregnant teen, however, husbands and boyfriends, non-pregnant teens, and pregnant adults are also learning from this curriculum.

A Peer Breastfeeding Educator Program exists in twelve Pennsylvania counties. In addition to nutrition education, the mother-infant team receives breastfeeding information and support.

SuperCupboards are another model used by EFNEP for reaching chronic users of emergency food systems. *SuperCupboards* evaluate community needs and resources and tailor programs that teach self-sufficiency and self-esteem. Community involvement and coalition building are an integral part of the *SuperCupboard* model.

Accomplishments

EFNEP has been active in Pennsylvania for 27 years. During 1995, 76.1 percent of FTE nutrition education advisers received referrals from neighborhood contacts, churches, agencies, former participants, and other individuals across the Commonwealth. Volunteers contributed 33,215 hours to EFNEP in 1995. The nutritional progress of participating clients is measured by reviewing their diet at their entrance and exit from the program. Comparisons of these two measurements show that nutrition education advisers are definitely helping families to improve their diets. When they entered the program, only 28.9 percent of adult participants reported diets that contained foods from all the five food groups. This number increased to 69.1 percent by the time the clients completed the program. A positive change in some food group was noted in 92.4 percent of clients exiting the program. In 1995, a total of 5911 homemakers, including 648 pregnant teens, and 10,749 youth participated in Pennsylvania's EFNEP program. Sixty-four percent of the clients were taught in groups, 73 percent were families with children, and 36 percent of those served were minorities.

Funding

Pennsylvania's EFNEP is funded by the US Department of Agriculture. It is operated by Penn State Cooperative Extension. Federal funds for EFNEP are based on the percentage of families at or below the poverty level in each state.

Participating counties in Pennsylvania provide support to the program with office space, clerical staff, and shared office supplies. County funding may also provide support for additional nutrition education advisers. Additional funding is provided by agencies such as the Private Industry Council and the United Way, while coalitions with other agencies such as WIC, Food Stamps, and the Pennsylvania Coalition on Food and Nutrition provide additional support.

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FELIX, BURDINE AND ASSOCIATES, INC.

Where

National, with central offices in Allentown, PA.

Mission

Felix, Burdine and Associates works to help communities and health care organizations across the country create local processes for improving health status, access to care, and costs of care. Felix, Burdine and Associates focuses on developing a shared vision for health, and building the capacity of participants to better solve future health problems.

How

Felix, Burdine and Associates was founded in 1992 by Michael R. J. Felix and Dr. James N. Burdine, who have worked an average of twenty years each in health care and community health. Their health development firm specializes in collaborative efforts to improve the health status of communities and enrolled populations.

These collaborations bring together community leaders in education, religion, health care, business, human services, local government, and mass media. This organizing strategy develops a shared vision for health and builds the capacity of participants to better solve future health problems. This partnership approach, called Partnerships for Community Health, has two major elements. The first is the creation and development of the partnerships, and the second is the completion of a community health status assessment, the National Health Survey.

Felix, Burdine and Associates help communities to improve their health care systems by restructuring and integrating local health care and human services systems, utilizing health status assessment, and by sharing information. It also helps create community-based primary care systems, including the development of managed care organizations for low-income and uninsured persons.

Felix, Burdine and Associates provides assistance in health policy planning and implementation focused on issues such as reimbursement for primary care, alternative community primary care service delivery systems, and facilitation of national and state level health promotion programs. It also works to provide a variety of community health promotion activities that deal with topics such as heart disease and cancer prevention, exercise and weight reduction, drug and alcohol prevention, smoking cessation and prevention, and child health.

In addition to providing direct consultation, Felix, Burdine and Associates publish, lecture, and teach others about the theory, strategies, and methods of their approach.

Felix, Burdine and Associates has learned that the combination of current, local health status information with a community involvement strategy created for the particular characteristics of that community, can create the necessary environment to develop ideal health and human service delivery systems.

Accomplishments

Felix, Burdine and Associates has served dozens of health care organizations, human service agencies, local, state, and national government and non-governmental agencies in North and South America and Europe.

Felix, Burdine and Associates sponsored the National Health Survey in July of 1995, sampling more than twenty-five hundred randomly selected individuals from across the United States. The response rate was almost 70 percent. The survey addressed a broad range of health status indicators such as education, housing, and employment, and can help to fill the gaps in national information about health care. This information can be used by health care and human service administrators, managed care professionals, and purchasers of care to aid in strategic decision-making, planning and evaluation.

In the past three years, Felix, Burdine and Associates has helped several communities such as Kent County, Delaware and Columbia, South Carolina to develop quality Partnership for Community Health programs.

Funding

Felix, Burdine and Associates, Inc. is a for-profit organization. It receives its funds from various community organizations and agencies which often have a hospital system in their group. These organizations request aid from Felix, Burdine and Associates, and give support in return.

Future Plans

Felix, Burdine and Associates looks forward to the future as a time to continue providing services to communities across the country. It is currently looking to expand and improve its National Health Survey so that it will be specific to each state. It is also looking to expand its variety of services to include more programs for human services. According to associate Amy Llewellyn, Felix, Burdine and Associates will continue "*to carry on their community work at a national level.*"

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THE FIRST TIME HOME BUYERS PROGRAM

Where

Lycoming, Montour, Northumberland, Snyder, and Union counties

Mission

Through a combination of grants, low-interest loans, educational programs, and assistance, this program helps low-income families purchase their own homes.

How

The program is offered by the Susquehanna Valley Bankers Housing Consortium, a group of six banks that have joined together to sponsor the program in five primarily rural Pennsylvania counties. The program targets low-income families who have never owned a home.

The First Time Home Buyers Program is made up of three main service components: 1) consumer/fiscal education to potential first time buyers; 2) pre-sale home inspection and energy audit services; and 3) affordable financing, down payment, and closing cost assistance for home purchases.

Under the education component, interested program participants obtain 16 hours of instruction pertaining to home purchase and ownership. Upon completing the instruction component, applicants are ready to shop for a home.

Once the applicant finds a house, the SEDA-Council of Governments, a coalition of governments in the five-county region, inspects the home to determine its soundness and energy efficiency. The inspection helps ensure that the owner will not encounter expensive repairs or pay unreasonable utility costs.

Assistance with the actual purchase of a home is provided after the house passes the inspection and energy audit. Utilizing a total of $500,000 of their own funds and $725, 328 in funds advanced from the Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh, the Susquehanna Valley Bankers' Consortium processes a financing package for applicants who have successfully completed the program's education component. The financing package includes low-interest financing of 90% of a home's purchase price, grants of up to $2,000 to assist with closing costs, and pays up to 85% of the home's down payment (depending on the family income level). Homes purchased through the program must not cost more than $75,000.

Accomplishments

So far, nineteen low-income families have purchased homes through the program. Thirteen of the families had incomes between 50% and 80% of the median income and were able to purchase homes in good repair that cost between $50-80,000. Six of the homes were purchased by families earning less than 50% of the median.

Three of the houses that were found to be in poor repair were completely refurbished by a local government-sponsored housing development corporation (with funding provided through the state Department of Community Affairs), at no cost to the families involved. Applicants only have to contribute between $700-4,800 of their own funds (depending on income level and house price), thanks to the program's down-payment and closing cost assistance.

Funding

Funding is provided by the Susquehanna Valley Bankers Consortium, the Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh, the Pennsylvania Department of Community Affairs, and the Boards of Commissioners of the five participating counties.

Future Plans

Now that two additional banks have joined the Consortium, low-income families in a sixth county will be able to purchase homes with the help of the program.

Testimony

"It's important to help low-income families obtain their own home because it gives them an opportunity they otherwise wouldn't have to build their own equity," said housing director Michael Fisher. *"Neighborhoods benefit as well, because many of the houses that these families have bought used to be rental units, and it's good for neighborhoods to have solid family ownership of the houses."*

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HEALTHY CONNECTIONS, INC.

Where

Towanda Area School District, Towanda, PA

Mission

The purpose of Healthy Connections, as a school-based health clinic, is to decrease absenteeism in the school district by providing health care in the school. These health clinics are designed to provide preventive health care to students who would otherwise not receive it, and to help assure that students in the schools are healthy and able to perform successfully.

How

Healthy Connections was established through a proposal to the Maternal/Child Division of the Pennsylvania Department of Health submitted in August of 1992. Problems such as lack of a public transportation system, long waiting periods at area health clinics, and limited hours at those clinics proved that a school-based health service program was desperately needed. Because the children of the district were falling back in attendance due to illness, the district felt a need for this program. The Towanda Area School District was one of six school districts in Pennsylvania that were given grant funding to run school-based health clinics beginning in May 1993.

Healthy Connections has targeted students in four-year-old kindergarten (K4) and five-year-old kindergarten (K5) programs. It also offers various services to a significant number of other elementary and middle school children, as well as their families.

The Towanda Area School District and Healthy Connections offer three basic services: a universal kindergarten program for four-year-old children, a school-based health center serving preschool and school-aged children and their families, and a family center, which focuses on quality family development to encourage good home environments.

The advantages for students and their families are the convenience of an in school clinic, the ease for the health care providers to offer follow-up care, and increased contact between health care providers and classroom personnel.

Children receive quality health care from Healthy Connections, and are also provided with health focused activities in the classroom. Each week a guest speaker is invited to the K4 classroom to educate the children on a specific health topic. Examples of these topics include discussions about nutrition, dental health, poison prevention, gun safety, and bicycle safety. These sessions are often interactive with videos, hands-on materials, and fun-to-do, take-home activities for the children.

To augment this health teaching in the classroom, Healthy Connections also offers a monthly Parent Health Talk. As with the children's program, a guest speaker comes to the school to provide health teaching for the parents. The topic is often the same as that for the children, which helps to reinforce the information.

Currently, Healthy Connections has an enrollment of 95 percent of the total K4/K5 enrollment.

Accomplishments

Each year, Healthy Connections' assessment is evaluated by various satisfaction surveys and formal evaluations. These evaluations clearly show the success of the program. From the period of July 1995 to December 1995, the total enrollment of Healthy Connections was four hundred children. The total number of enrollees who attended K4/K5 was 256, while siblings of the K4/K5 students and other elementary and middle school children made up the other 143 enrollees.

Since July 1995, there have been 570 office visits, excluding physical exams. There have been eighty-six physical exams conducted since August of 1993. Clearly, Healthy Connections has provided quality health care to children who need it.

Funding

Because Healthy Connections is a school-based program, it receives the bulk of its funding from grants and state monies. A small amount of support is received from billing, but Healthy Connections depends on the state for most of its funds.

Future Plans

Healthy Connections seeks to continue providing quality health care to the children and families of the Towanda Area School District. As long as there is a need, Healthy Connections seeks to continue to meet it.

Because of the great demand, Healthy Connections sees a definite need to continue expanding its services and programs. The future will obviously hold promises of expansion and continued success in meeting the needs of Towanda children and their families.

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LOCAL ENTERPRISE AND ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Where

Bloomsburg University, Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania

Mission

For many rural residents, lack of financing, little or no training, and isolation from large business centers can prove a tough hurdle to overcome in terms of starting their own businesses. That's where Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania's Local Enterprise and Assistance Program (LEAP) comes in. Initiated in 1991 by Bloomsburg professors Frank Lindenfeld and Pamela Wynn and administered through the non-profit Rural Enterprise Development Corporation, the program helps participants start or expand microenterprises.

How

Staffed under a management contract with the Bloomsburg Area Chamber of Commerce, the program helps rural residents within a 35 mile radius of Bloomsburg raise their incomes through self-employment.

"Many small businesses fail because the owners don't have adequate information or training," says Kim Belinsky, program coordinator. *"We are there as a resource to provide guidance and information to low-and moderate-income small business owners."*

The Program offers eight weeks of business training classes, technical assistance from Bloomsburg University MBA students, networking in peer business associations, and loans through its revolving loan fund. The fund currently totals $379,000, some 28% of which is equity.

Helping participants develop a "business plan" is the primary focus of the program. The business plan includes the proposed business, the owner's business qualifications, and the funding and facilities necessary to start the business. Once participants complete the program, their plans serve as the foundation for their business.

"We have a small-business counselor from the chamber of commerce assist the participants with their business plan." Belinsky said. *"We help them discover what it is they want to do and whether they're suited to run a particular business."*

The business plans are the focus of the training courses that all participants attend. The courses cover topics such as marketing, management, and legal issues, and are taught by local business owners. They also include lectures by visiting lawyers and bankers. Instead of graded exams, participants are given reading and writing assignments that help them develop their business plans.

Once the participants complete the courses, MBA students from the university are assigned to help them refine their plans. The students provide technical assistance to the participants by developing and carrying out marketing surveys and financial analyses, etc. Their assistance is part of a class project assignment.

After completing their business plans, the participants apply for loans from the program's revolving loan fund, which is still in its beginning stages. Currently, the program is able to make small loans, usually in the range of $1200. It hopes to be able to offer loans in the range of $20-30,000 in the near future. Participants qualify for loans according to standards set by participating banks, but all loans are contingent upon the participant having an approved business plan. *"Local banks have been very enthusiastic about the program."* Belinsky said.

Accomplishments

The Local Enterprise and Assistance Program has had a positive impact on the community. Some visible signs of its success include a Mexican restaurant, tanning salon, children's used clothing store, and a coffee shop/deli located in a former drive-in bank building, all owned and operated by graduates of the program. Although little to no advertising is used to promote the program, favorable word of mouth has resulted in increased enrollments for the courses with each cycle. There's currently a waiting list of applicants.

Funding

Primary funding sources include the state-funded Center for Rural Pennsylvania, the State Department of Commerce, Bloomsburg University, and various foundations. The program is in the process of securing funding from more sources.

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PARENT EDUCATION FOR AT-RISK FAMILIES

Where

The program currently operates in three mostly rural counties in central Pennsylvania

Mission

Individuals reared in emotionally, mentally, and/or sexually abusive homes often are unprepared for parenthood, and challenged by low-literacy skills. The purpose of The Parent Education Program for At-Risk Families is to stop the viscious cycle of child abuse that can occur when parents who have been victimized by child abuse are faced with the responsibility of parenting with few positive role models or support. The Program is a workshop designed to enhance the parenting skills of parents who have neglectful or abusive tendencies.

How

Operating in three rural counties in Pennsylvania for four years, the training program focuses on child development, positive discipline, health and safety of children, interactive play, parental and child self-esteem, and the importance of adequate nutrition. Materials are presented in a non-threatening educational atmosphere, using a variety of teaching resources.

The program is taught by Jane Mecum, a Cooperative Extension Family Life Educator. *"Some parents come in with a difficult attitude because they've been court-ordered to attend the training,"* Mecum said. *"We tell them that we're not being accusatory, that we know they want to be a good parent, and after that their attitude usually improves."*

The training encourages the parent to look back on their childhood and analyze what happened in terms of parental abuse. The goal is to make the parents realize that they must not make the same mistakes with their own children that their parents made with them.

Accomplishments

Results of the workshop indicate that all parents made a significant attempt to understand and change their negative approaches to handling discipline problems. Even though participants had limited positive experiences with formal education, they showed positive interest in possessing their own educational notebooks, attending all the sessions, and being on time. Many became active discussion participants. Each week, parents shared what positive changes they were attempting. However, the permanence and over-all effectiveness is difficult to measure. Case workers indicated that 25% of the parents continued to apply much of the knowledge gained and another 20% were using some of the discipline techniques they had learned.

Funding

The pilot program was funded by the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development with a $5000 grant. Since then, the Perry County Children and Youth agency has provided financial and in-kind support to the program on a semi-annual basis. A trained volunteer assisted in providing the program to the Mifflin County Children and Youth parents. The program has provided an opportunity for collaboration between extension, agencies, and parents.

Future Plans

Mecum's future plans include developing a foster parent-mentoring program. Through this program, foster parents would serve as mentors to the foster children's parents. Mecum believes that the close interaction of children with their parents and foster parents will lessen the trauma associated with removing children from their parents.

Testimony

"Child abuse is a major problem in the program's service area. Perry County, one of our rural counties, has the highest per capita instance of child abuse in Pennsylvania," said Mecum.

A positive example of the program's success was the case of a young mother with three children who came in for training. When the mother's boyfriend exerted control over the children, they refused to cooperate with their mother. Through the parenting class, the mother learned to exercise control over her children without being abusive. When the boyfriend, whom Mecum suspects felt threatened by the mother's newfound confidence, began physically abusing the mother, she left him.

"Some may think the program failed because the relationship ended," said Mecum. *"But I see it as a success, because the mother had developed enough confidence to end the relationship before the boyfriend could start abusing the children."*

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PARENTS AS EDUCATION PARTNERS PROGRAM

Where

Serving four school districts in the rural Pennsylvania counties of Bradford, Potter, and Tioga, the Parents as Education Partners Program is managed from Mansfield University.

Mission

Managed by the Rural Services Institiute of Mansfield University, Mansfield, PA, the program was begun to encourage local children to go on to college or trade school after graduating from high school. It targets children whose parents never attended college. The program brings parents and children closer together while exploring post-secondary education .

How

"We select kids who we think have the potential to succeed in college," says Betty Mack, program coordinator. *"We focus on kids whose parents haven't attended post-secondary school, as well as kids recommended to the program by teachers."*
A 'C' average also is required for participation in the program.

Once selected, children and their parents attend seminars, presentations, and go on tours of various colleges and technical schools. They hear speakers from the local community who have attended college, and learn about financial aid sources during special workshops.

Learning about other viewpoints is another objective of the program. Children attend an international festival and correspond with pen pals from Mansfield University, Mack said.

The program typically serves about 90 children from each school district in a given year. In order to better tailor the program for the students, they are grouped by grade into three different levels: 3rd and 4th, 7th and 8th, and 10th and 11th. The focus for each group is different; the third and fourth graders, for example, focus on the overall importance of education, while seventh and eighth graders concentrate on discovering alternative futures, and tenth and eleventh graders refine their goals and look at specific options within post-secondary education.

Parental involvement is key to the program, which is why many activities are scheduled in the evening or on weekends so that parents may attend with their children. *"Parents are the primary participants,"* Mack says. *"Parents must be involved for the program to be successful."*

These parents's lack of expectations for their children to further their education after high school is a major obstacle faced by The Program. *"Expectations, or lack of them, are a bigger factor in deciding whether the kid goes on to college than the costs of tuition,"* says Mack. *"If your family does not expect you to go onto college, then it's very difficult to change the perception that furthering your education isn't a goal worth pursuing."*

Accomplishments

Although no statistics are available just yet, Mack says that many students who have participated in the program have enrolled in college or trade school. Once a consulting firm has completed its evaluation of the program, she expects to have better data available to measure the program's success.

One thing is already obvious, however. The community greatly supports the program. *"A lot of parents and community members have been very willing to help this program,"* Mack said.

Testimony

"Furthering one's education doesn't necessarily mean college, which is why the program is careful to include trade and technical schools in the tour of campuses. We expose them to as many choices as we can," Mack says. *"We tell them to look at the job market to determine the availability of jobs in the area they're interested in. We also encourage them to look at associate degree and certification programs, not just four year degrees."*

Contact

The Parents as Education Partners program is no longer active due to the fact that they did not receive grant funding for this year.

PENNSYLVANIA PARTNERS

Where

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The administrative office is found in Harrisburg, PA.

Mission

The main goal of Pennsylvania Partners is to provide training and job placement to eligible adults and youth needing job security. PA Partners programs focus on hard-to-employ people, and work to provide success for these people.

How

PA Partners is a voluntary association of all of the Commonwealth's Service Delivery Areas. These Service Delivery Areas were created under the Job Training Partnership Act of 1982 to operate job training programs.

A Service Delivery Area is one or more units of local government, such as cities, counties, or groups of counties. These Service Delivery Areas have the option of either running their programs directly, or designating non-profit administrative groups or Private Industry Councils to run them. Pennsylvania has a mix of all these options.

Representatives from each Service Delivery Area meet to exchange ideas about the programs PA Partners offers. The representatives discuss program improvement to help provide the best services possible. This statewide association of Service Delivery Areas provides job training and placement to adults, youth, welfare recipients, dislocated workers, veterans, and other groups needing help in locating jobs.

PA Partners also offers periodic staff development sessions on a variety of topics, monthly meetings of the Board of Directors and members, an annual conference in Hershey, and assistance in development of analyses, position papers, and correspondence.

PA Partners is governed by a Board of Directors. Its twelve members are elected annually by members of PA Partners. PA Partners is administered by a full-time professional staff in Harrisburg.

Accomplishments

The Service Delivery Areas of PA Partners have worked together since 1982 to provide job opportunities for the people of Pennsylvania. Through various job training and welfare programs, the members of PA Partners have trained and placed more than 600,000 adults and youth with public and private employers throughout the Commonwealth.

Pennsylvania is also nationally recognized for its programs for welfare recipients. It features many special services, such as those helping welfare mothers make a lasting transition to the labor force. The Service Delivery Areas also run the most comprehensive youth community service programs in the nation. Clearly, PA Partners has seen success in its programs, and looks forward to continuing this tremendous success in the future!

Funding

The Service Delivery Areas of PA Partners receive funding to support job training from the federal government through the PA Departments of Labor and Industry, Public Welfare, and Education. The association of PA Partners is supported by the State Department of Labor, and other various state and local sources.

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PENNSYLVANIA SERVICE SCHOLARS

Where

The program currently involves about 150 college students at 32 participating campuses (many of them in rural locations) throughout Pennsylvania.

Mission

Now more than ever, community service is viewed as an important complement to a college education. The Pennsylvania Campus Compact, a coalition of fifty-one colleges and universities that works to foster an ethic of civic responsibility and service learning opportunities on campuses and in communities, has formed the Pennsylvania Service Scholars program. This program provides Pennsylvania college students with the opportunity to engage in service learning as part of their college experience by working in their local communities to address human, educational, public safety, and environmental needs.

Pennsylvania Service Scholars is affiliated with the federal Americorps national service program, from which it receives some funding and support.

How

Service Scholars attend a two-day training session at the beginning and middle of each calendar year, and half-day regional sessions also are coordinated throughout the year for Scholars, faculty, administrators, and community partners. The training sessions include leadership training, diversity, conflict resolution, program management, CPR training, and wellness.

In addition to their service work, Scholars must take courses that integrate service learning into the academic curriculum and provide activities involving service learning and reflection. Each participating institution is required to develop these courses. One such course offered by Bloomsburg University is titled "Community Psychology," and includes the study of how community environments influence individual behavior, and how these environments may be altered to improve the psychological well-being of individuals.

Each participating institution is responsible for selecting Service Scholars from among the pool of students on their campus. Prior community involvement, economic need, and good academic standing are among the factors that determine a student's eligibility. Projects for the Scholars to participate in are arranged through partnerships between each of the thirty-two participating schools and community agencies within their immediate area.

The program is administered through the Pennsylvania Campus Compact offices in Harrisburg. The program works to keep full-time staff to a minimum by having day-to-day supervision of the Scholars managed by the host site supervisors and community partners.

Accomplishments

One Service Scholars project provides hands-on experience for emotionally and developmentally challenged children by teaching them to develop and sustain viable agricultural products through 4-H projects involving crops and animals. Students from Delaware Valley College manage the project and serve as mentors/tutors to the children who range in age from 8 to 15.

Another example is occurring at Community College of Allegheny County, where Service Scholars have begun a mentor/tutor program in nine local school districts and in the vocational-technical school involving twenty-four middle-school students with dyslexia and learning disorders. The program has been so successful that the schools involved have requested additional Scholars and are considering summer programs as well.

Funding

Pennsylvania Service Scholars receives funding and support from the federal Americorps national service program.

Future Plans

Future plans include a long-range funding plan to allow for the participation of up to three hundred students in the program per year. The funding plan targets corporations and foundations, and will compensate for projected cuts in Americorps funding.

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SULLIVAN COUNTY VICTIM'S SERVICES

Where

Sullivan County, PA, an isolated part of the state with few economic opportunities and a high alcoholism rate.

Mission

The primary mission of the Sullivan County Victims' Service is to teach victims how to help themselves.

How

The program was initiated in 1987, after a need assessment team determined that a service was needed for victims of sexual assault and domestic violence. Governed by a board of directors and with three full-time certified counselors, Sullivan County Victims' Services served eighty-five domestic violence victims and twenty-six sexual assault victims in 1994.

The services provided by the program include a twenty-four hour hotline staffed by the counselors and trained volunteers, legal advocacy, a shelter for battered women and children, transportation, and community education programs designed to raise awareness of domestic violence and sexual assault issues.

Victims are referred to the service by police, other human service agencies, friends, and relatives. Protecting victims from their aggressors is one of the first steps in the program.

"We guide the victims through the legal system, helping them get restraining orders placed against their attackers if necessary," said Patricia Colantonio, coordinator of the program. *"We also find them shelter if they don't feel it's safe to return home. Our purpose is to help victims help themselves."* Colantonio said. *"Counseling is long-term, with some women coming back for counseling over a period of years. Many times women will drop in from time to time just to let us know they're okay. Other times they'll come back because they're feeling depressed and need someone to talk to. Sometimes we'll have women who've gotten out of a long-term abusive relationship who will come in years later because they're depressed that they don't have any happy memories from that long period of their lives."*

Accomplishments

The program has counseled 126 victims of sexual assault and domestic violence, and 13 children who lived in households where domestic violence occurred. The program's impact on the area is obvious.

"More and more people are using our services," Colantonio said. *"And the community's support is good, and getting better."*

Part of that support includes special awareness days set aside by the community to focus on the problem of domestic violence and sexual abuse. The local paper has given coverage to the program's activities, including tree planting in the park to commemorate victims. Although some victims have had unhappy and sometimes tragic experiences, others have had happier outcomes.

"One woman who used our services had to flee her home one night in midwinter in a nightgown because her husband was beating her," Colantonio said. *"We helped her get a restraining order placed against him, and he enrolled in Alcoholics Anonymous. Now he is a volunteer with AA, and they are back together again."*

"Programs like Victims' Services benefit communities in more ways than one," said Daryl Heasley, a rural sociologist at Penn State and director of the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development. *"Someone who is freed from having to worry about his/her own and the family's health and safety is better able to enter the workforce, become a productive citizen, and, indirectly, benefit the local economy."*

Funding

An annual budget of $80,000 is provided by the county, the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape, a community development block grant, and private donations.

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SUPERCUPBOARDS

Where

SuperCupboards programs are found in various counties across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and are tailored to the unique needs of each county.

Mission

SuperCupboards is a program devoted to helping community members learn new skills and improve their own lives through nutrition counseling. SuperCupboards provides counseling and training to help participants build self-sufficiency, train for a better life, gain responsibility for self, and participate in many educational opportunities. Participants also gain nutritional education, learn to have time for themselves, and gain better attitudes towards health. SuperCupboards helps participants by giving them strength to become better providers and better people.

How

SuperCupboards programs meet one day a week for six weeks at a central location in the county. During each session, participants are given nutrition education through presentations on topics such as the food pyramid, food safety, cooking ideas, food labels, and budgeting.

Participants are given a menu at each session. They prepare the meal together, then enjoy the meal for lunch. This helps the participants use hands-on experience as a learning tool.

Participants leave each session with new recipes, new friends, new skills, and a bag of groceries. At the end of the six-week program, those with perfect attendance receive a certificate or diploma of completion from the Penn State University Cooperative Extension, along with a feeling of self-confidence and pride.

Virtually anyone may attend SuperCupboards. Participants include those who use emergency food banks more than once a year or receive WIC, those who take care of young, school-age children, those who want to plan better meals for themselves and their families, and those who want to make a commitment to change their lives and move toward self-reliance.

Accomplishments

To date, Cooperative Extension agent Jane Mecum has conducted 1 four-week summer mini-session and 3 six-week sessions with thirty individuals (twenty-eight women and two men) participating in Juniata and Perry counties. SuperCupboards will have graduated twenty-seven students by May 21, 1996.

Mecum feels a great sense of accomplishment from programs in Juniata and Perry counties. Each community has worked to make SuperCupboards successful. Participants come into the program feeling unsure of the outcome, and finish as a group of new friends with skills they are anxious to use.

From various evaluations, SuperCupboards was able to determine that all participants learned skills involved in meal planning and preparation. Many indicated they did apply what they learned at home in planning meals. Some popular recipes used were fruit desserts, pizza, Spanish rice, stir-fry dishes, potato soup, and broccoli. Participants who had frequently gone out to eat before the program indicated that they now had a full refrigerator, a satisfied family, and a sense of self-pride and accomplishment.

Funding

SuperCupboards funding sources vary in each county. Local food banks, churches, community civic organizations, individual volunteers, and a family center provide food, space, child care, kitchen ware, and personal items for each of the participants.

Future Plans

Currently, SuperCupboards is active in many counties of Pennsylvania. The program has financial support to open SuperCupboards programs in other counties; however, they do need community support and funds to make the next few programs as successful as the first few have been.

Testimony

SuperCupboards participants have voiced several words of success. One student said, "*I always took my kids out to eat; now I have a refrigerator full of fresh vegetables, and we haven't gone out this whole time.*" Another student said, "*My family really likes what I make, and I feel better about cooking.*"

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RHODE ISLAND

Pathways from Poverty Team

Team Vision

The *vision* of the Rhode Island Pathways from Poverty Team is that "working poor" families will become gainfully employed and move out of poverty to a situation with family health-care benefits, adequate and affordable transportation, child care, and housing.

Accomplishments

Rhode Island's team has been active under the direction of acting leader Gayla Gazerro since the conference last September. The team did create a workplan at the conference for their activities and efforts, and has met several times to discuss implementing this workplan. The workplan specifically takes on the goals of improving the health, education, housing, and transportation situations of the rural poor in Rhode Island. The team would like to assess needs of the people, design strategies to meet those needs, secure funding for the strategies, implement the programs, and evaluate the programs. Throughout the remainder of 1996, the team hopes to demonstrate and implement the programs, as long as there is funding available. Team members are now in the process of identifying funds to help support and maintain programs that offer opportunities and options for the "working poor" in rural communities of Rhode Island.

The team has held a community-based Pathways from Poverty Coalition/Consortium which focused on issues relating to the "working poor" in Rhode Island's rural communities. The meeting focused on discussing such issues as building a statewide coalition to address issues facing the "working poor" in program and policy development. The meeting also gave the team the chance to develop an action plan in the areas of transportation, self-sufficiency, and employment and training opportunities.

Future Plans

The Rhode Island Pathways Team has set several objectives for their meetings and for the future activities of the team. The team would like to conduct an issues analysis to develop a set of issues/concerns related to the "working poor" population in rural areas of Rhode Island. They would also like to initiate the beginning of a statewide strategic plan to address these issues. The team also hopes to provide an opportunity for a public forum for state, local and community-based organizations that have a direct working relationship with the designated rural population in the state. The future also holds the opportunity for the team to form an ongoing Coalition/Consortium so that each community in need may find answers to their problems.

Follow-Up Seed Grant Funds

The Rhode Island Pathways from Poverty Team requested $1,300 from the Northeast Center for activities relating to their initiative. The team used the money for the coordinator, facilities, food, printing, and supplies of their last meeting.

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VERMONT

Pathways from Poverty Team

Team Mission

The *mission* of the Vermont Pathways from Poverty Team is to improve access to Vermont poverty programs and to the Extension System network of the Northeast region.

Accomplishments

The Vermont Pathways from Poverty Team has been involved in many activities since the conference last fall. The team has created a directory of organizations that provide poverty-prevention services to people in Vermont. The first section of this directory consists of a listing of around thirty programs with descriptions of the services they provide, and a second section lists additional programs and their addresses. The team is currently in the process of completing a temporary draft of this directory. It is hoped that by using this directory, the poor of Vermont will be able to gain information about programs which they can turn to for help. These programs focus on helping people out of poverty situations.

The team is also working on a data base that will provide one-page handouts depicting poverty by legislative district in the state. The team plans to distribute this information to their legislature.

Future Plans

The Vermont Pathways Team is also working on another project focusing on the Extension System of the Northeast Region. The team intends to complete a study that will identify all projects that the Extension System has been involved in which help the poor of Vermont. Through a questionnaire sent to the Extension Network, the team plans to develop an inventory of Extension projects that deal with Pathways from Poverty efforts. The survey will attempt to assess these programs in terms of their organizational characteristics and success. The team has not received a high response to the questionnaire, and has sent out an additional reminder.

Follow-Up Seed Grant Funds

The Vermont Pathways from Poverty Team has requested $1300 in funds from the Northeast Center.

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THE BENNINGTON-RUTLAND OPPORTUNITY COUNCIL, INC

Where

Bennington and Rutland counties, central offices in Rutland and Bennington, Vermont.

Mission

"The Bennington-Rutland Opportunity Council, Inc., your Community Action Agency, is dedicated to developing and promoting self-sufficiency within our communities. We encourage individuals and families to actively participate in programs, decision making, and volunteerism. Our mission is to help people help themselves."

How

The quest of the non-profit Council is to help low-income members of Benington and Rutland Counties move out of poverty, become more self-sufficient, and provide positive change in their lives. Its departments include Community Services, Energy Conservation, Nutrition Education, and Community and Economic Development.

Through its Community Services department, The Council focuses on Family Economic Development (FED). FED is a long-term, home-based, intensive care management system for entire families. The Community Service Department also offers information and crisis intervention related to food and nutrition, fuel and utilities, and housing and homeless issues.

The Council's Energy Conservation and Development department increases home energy efficiency by weatherization measures such as insulation and heating system improvements.

Through its Nutrition Education department, The Council provides nutrition education and quality meals to children in Bennington and Rutland counties. The Child and Adult Care Food Program helps registered Day Care homes serve nutritious meals and provides technical assistance about nutrition. Each home is monitored by visits three times a year, and menus are reviewed each month. A monetary subsidy is provided to ensure the purchase of nutritious food.

The Nutrition Education department also sponsors a School Breakfast Expansion Program. This program assists in the implementation and promotion of breakfast programs in all schools that do not currently have a program, while supporting all schools with existing programs.

Lastly, the Community and Economic Development department works in housing and micro-business development. The housing service supports the preservation of quality, affordable housing through tenant services, home improvement loans, and repair of existing units. The Micro-Business Development Program helps to promote self-sufficiency for Vermonters through business ownership. Assistance consists of one-on-one counseling and classroom training, as well as referrals to more advanced training for business start-ups and existing enterprises.

Accomplishments

In the past few years, The Council has been successful in bringing Benington and Rutland counties of Vermont together and helping them learn to help themselves.

The needy have received assitance for food, utilities, housing, and other technical assistance. The weatherization program has improved nearly 600 homes, assisting a total of 1670 people.

Through the Child and Adult Care Food Program, approximately 108 day care homes (~1150 children) are served each year. Currently, the School Breakfast Expansion Program assists nearly twenty schools in Vermont. In addition, all fifty schools in Rutland and Bennington Counties have access to nutrition education workshops.

In 1994, 475 residents of mobile home parks were helped through technical assistance. Through the Micro-Business Development Program, over ninety clients actively explored self-employment and twenty businesses were started and/or expanded.

Funding

The Council receives over $2,000,000 in support from state and federal grants, and other contributions. The Council does charge for some services, but this is a small percentage of their support.

Future Plans

The Council looks to the future as a huge opportunity to improve and expand their services, even though fiscal times are tough. The Council looks to expand volunteerism and community involvement in the hopes of improving its services, and will also keep in close contact with its congressional leaders to find solutions to community problems.

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BUILDING COLLABORATIONS

Where

Caledonia, Essex, and Orleans Counties in northeastern Vermont

Mission

Building Collaborations is an extension program focusing on at-risk youth in the rural area of northeast Vermont that suffers from relatively high rates of poverty and unemployment. The program provides activities that promote self-esteem, teamwork, and responsibility.

How

Collaboration between other programs and agencies, as well as support from private businesses, has allowed the program to offer a variety of activities. For example, "Foodworks," a program focusing on nutrition, was jointly sponsored by the state Departments of Education and Agriculture. A tour of a local, state-of-the-art paper mill allowed youngsters to see firsthand how math and other subjects are used in the real world.

Programs are initiated and developed through local steering committees that involve parents, teachers, elected officials, and the children themselves. The University of Vermont Extension Service provides guidance and overall coordination of the program.

Written evaluations from participants and parent interviews are among the tools used each year to assess the program. Extension workers also confer with the National Network for Collaboration, an organization composed of eleven land-grant institutions throughout the country that have instituted similar programs.

Accomplishments

The program has established groups in seven area towns that provide programs and activities to at-risk youth in those towns. The community groups raised nearly $26,000 in cash and in-kind services to provide funds for activities. Those funds will provide for the continuation of activities such as "Roots and Wings," a program designed to bring families together by involving children and parents in joint activities. Other activities include field trips, summer camps, and special confidence-building activities. So far, the program has served 195 youth ages 5 to 14.

Students who participated in confidence-building activities in one town reported increased self-esteem, self confidence, and a sense of personal growth and achievement in their year-end evaluation of the program.

Parents, as well as children, have benefited from participating in the program. One mother who participated in Roots and Wings decided to cut back on her hours at work in order to spend more time with her children. Another parent who participated in the program suggested a group for parents to discuss issues affecting their families.

Funding

Federal and local funds are combined to finance the program. Funding is provided in part by a $50,000 Youth at Risk Federal Site grant to the University of Vermont Extension Service from the USDA's National Extension Service. Each participating town must match $5000 provided by Vermont Extension with $1200 raised locally. Individual donations of money and volunteer services from community businesses, foundations and individuals provide additional support.

Future Plans

Future plans include educating the town steering committees on fund-raising techniques and grant writing to enable them to find more funding sources for their programs.

Other plans include forming a 4-H Club to provide additional activities for participants.

Testimony

"We've had several parents that have said there would be no summer activities for their kids if not for this program," said Ellen Rowe, Building Collaborations coordinator. *"This program has pulled folks together and encouraged them to look at more summer activities for kids. I think the steering committees were surprised by the overwhelming amount of support they got from the community."*

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COMMITTEE ON TEMPORARY SHELTER (COTS)

Where

based in Chittenden County, Vermont

Mission

Vermont has been ranked the third worst state in the nation for housing affordability by the Low Income Housing Information Service. Low-income families often find themselves with limited options in such an environment. The Committee on Temporary Shelter (COTS), a non-profit social service agency, believes affordable housing is a fundamental right for all. COTS's mission is to ensure that this opportunity exists for Vermonters. In addition to providing emergency shelter for families in crisis, COTS works to provide these families with long-range solutions to their problem.

How

The program began in 1982, when a group of concerned community members and organizations joined together to address the needs of the growing homeless population in Burlington.

COTS provides services in three areas: Emergency Shelter, Direct Service, and Affordable Housing. Many clients are referred to the program through local hospitals, churches, synagogues, social workers and substance abuse centers. The emergency shelter facilities include a way station shelter that served 471 people in 1994, and a family shelter housed in a renovated firehouse that served 56 families in the same year. COT's Direct Service Programs include the Streetworks Program, which provides Vocational Counseling, Peer Support, Basic Education, and immediate assistance in securing both Medical Treatment and Substance Abuse Counseling. Affordable housing services include "Families In Transition," which provides housing and transitional services for up to nine homeless families, and Wilson Hotel and St. John's Hall, renovated facilities that together contain fourty-four housing units for low-income individuals and families.

Accomplishments

The program has made a difference in the lives of numerous people, including the Haskell family. Struggling to support his wife and four children on earnings of $200 a week, Dave Haskell was unable to afford an apartment large enough for his family. Faced with homelessness, the Haskells came to the COTS Firehouse Family Shelter. Once there, Dave was able to attend FUTURES, a series of COTS vocational training workshops that enabled him to enter nursing school. Through COTS Streetwork, his wife was able to find a job in construction after enrolling in a program that offers women training in nontraditional occupations. In the meantime, COTS helped arrange daycare for the younger children and made sure school-age children attended school regularly.

St. John's Hall, COT's affordable housing program for the homeless, was recognized with the Maxwell Award for Excellence from the Fannie Mae Foundation.

Funding

The program obtains funding through corporate donations and state and federal grants. A large portion of its funding is raised through individual public donations and fundraising activities such as annual "walk-a-thons" and "phone-a-thons."

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THE GEORGE D. AIKEN RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Where

With central offices in Randolph, Vermont, The George D. Aiken Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council is one of many RC&D programs across the country. The Council is the backbone of the RC&D program in the six-county George D. Aiken area.

Mission

The mission of the George D. Aiken RC&D Council is to help people achieve sustainable development while caring for and appreciating their natural environment. The Council also wants to ensure economic opportunities, enriched communities, and better lives for the people of Vermont.

How

Established in 1964, The George D. Aiken RC&D Council is a non-profit organization that helps guide the activities and priorities of the RC&D program.

The RC&D program helps people care for and protect their natural resources in a way that will improve the area's economy, environment, and living standards. Local volunteers, organizations, and agencies bring their problems and needs to the Council, which then helps to establish goals and objectives, determine policy, set priorities for assistance, and facilitate action for local communities.

The goals of the Council include: 1) to have sustained economic growth and provide an adequate standard of living for residents; 2) to have a sustained and enhanced natural and cultural resource base that provides for the economic, social, environmental, spiritual, and aesthetic needs of the people; 3) to have public and private organizations, services, and facilities that provide for the safety, health, welfare, and recreational needs of the people; and 4) to sustain the capabilities of the RC&D Council to carry out its mission and maximize its effectiveness.

Examples of RC&D Council projects are the River Road Timber/Chipped Tires Retaining Wall completed in Arlington, VT, and the AmeriCorps Vermont Fire Technical Support Team. The River Road retaining wall pooled donated construction and services (at reduced costs) and state, federal, and RC&D Council funds to prevent the annual closing of River Road and temper the large amounts of silt that were entering the Battenkill River. The AmeriCorps Vermont Fire Technical Support Team hopes to reduce loss of life and property, to improve personal security, and to reduce the cost of fire insurance in rural areas of Vermont. This Team continues to educate communities about fire awareness and prevention, and provides services to encourage communities to seek maximum security from fire danger.

These are only a couple of examples of the services and programs provided by the George D. Aiken RC&D Council. According to Council Chair Edward McNamara, the Council is *"very proud that it can serve as a catalyst to empower and 'feed' Vermont communities and citizens as they strive to better themselves."* The Council strives to *"help others help themselves,"* and is doing this daily through its many successful services.

Accomplishments

The services and assistance of the RC&D Council have improved the lives of many Vermonters. Each year, the Council completes a variety of projects that improve the lives and living conditions of its focus area. The completion of the Arlington Retaining Wall was considered a great accomplishment and is a model for solving other environmental problems. During 1995, the Vermont Fire Technical Support Team gave assistance to eighty-five towns in Vermont, and supplied consultation and assistance worth nearly $55,000 to eleven towns. Expressed in dollars, the value of services provided by the Team for the year 1995 is estimated at around $300,000.

Funding

The George D. Aiken RC&D Council receives a base of support from the US Department of Agriculture. This money helps cover the salaries of the executive director and secretary, and covers any of the expenses for the office in Randolph. Many Council projects are supported by private foundations, state and federal agencies, and other organizations.

Future Plans

The RC&D Council is constantly working towards improving the communities of the George D. Aiken area, and will continue to do so in the future. The Council is becoming more interested in focusing on the concept of sustainable communities. It hopes to encourage more rural communities to empower themselves and make decisions for themselves through the sustainable system. This will help more communities understand the interdependence of economic, social, and environmental issues.

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THE HOME WORK PROJECT

Where

Lamoille, Washington, and Orange Counties in Vermont, as well as some portions of Windsor County, Vermont. The offices of the project are found in the Central Vermont Community Action Council offices in Barre, Vermont.

Mission

The mission of the HOME WORK Project is to research the viability of self-employment as a means for families to increase their incomes and become independent of direct public assistance. The Project is designed to move low-income Central Vermont residents toward economic self-sufficiency by helping them to develop their own home-based businesses through assessments, vocational training, and financing of equipment.

How

Started in 1994, The HOME WORK Project provides extensive training to low-income families in starting their own businesses. Families who are currently receiving AFDC benefits, or those living at 100 percent of federal poverty guidelines may participate. Participants are educated in how to start a business, keep it going, and make it successful. HOME WORK also provides instruction in areas such as sewing and knitting skills. By attending such classes, low-income families may learn a new skill and get ready to go into their own businesses. In providing this training, the HOME WORK Project is providing low-income families with a way to climb out of poverty.

The Project also offers a lease/purchase financing plan, through which participants can purchase machinery such as knitting and sewing machines. With these purchases, the participants may begin producing goods for small and mid-size firms throughout the state. With this accomplishment, the participants can build up their own businesses, increase their incomes, and become independent of all direct public assistance.

The HOME WORK Project also provides individual and group business counseling and support. Individual participants may seek advice from HOME WORK staff in how to improve their businesses. Group support also provides a means of allowing participants to learn from each other, share ideas, and improve their businesses.

Through the help of the HOME WORK Project, many low-income families of Vermont have become successful and continue to rise up out of poverty.

Accomplishments

The HOME WORK Project has already helped many low-income families to begin their own successful businesses. Not even halfway through the project, HOME WORK has already helped to start up seventeen successful businesses, all owned by very low-income women. The HOME WORK Project has also provided business and life skills training to women in order to help them operate their businesses as well as care for themselves and their children.

Funding

The HOME WORK Project is sponsored by the Central Vermont Community Action Council. The HOME WORK Project is supported largely through a federal grant from the US Department of Health and Human Services. This is a research grant, focused on helping at least one hundred women gain self-sufficiency through self-employment at the end of three years.

Future Plans

The HOME WORK Project is now making plans to facilitate the start-up of a production cooperative. The cooperative would meet the production needs of small to mid-size companies, and the members/owners could earn their much needed income.

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SUNRISE FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER, INC.

Where

Based in Bennington, Vermont, this non-profit organization serves residents of Bennington County and surrounding areas.

Mission

Sunrise Family Resource Center's mission is to work with families to promote their growth and development through encouragement of their strengths, expansion of their opportunities, and support in times of stress. The agency provides on-site child care and counseling, and also serves as a referral service by linking clients with vocational training or drug and alcohol treatment programs.

How

Child care, playgroups, parental education and support, drop-in services, and home-based services are among the programs offered by the Resource Center. With a full-time staff of twenty-two trained counselors and child care workers, the agency maintains an infant toddler room, a pre-school room, a family advocacy program, a substance abuse counseling center, and parenting courses at its Bennington headquarters.

The Center's programs for children include an Early Education Initiative, which is a preschool program funded by the state Department of Education. Programs for adults include a welfare-to-work program that teaches life skills, parent education, and peer and social skills. It also refers participants to job-training programs. The Center goes the distance for its clients, providing extras such as money for car repair to those in need.

Accomplishments

The program serves as the main provider of social services to disadvantaged families in Bennington County that require long-term assistance. Due to the nature of its mission, the agency has low caseload numbers, but provides much longer-term care to low-income families who suffer from such problems as illiteracy and drug use.

The Center's impact is difficult to measure in quantitative terms, but clear success stories do exist. One family that the agency worked with had a history of housing problems and had been homeless three times during the previous year. After their case was referred to the Resource Center, they maintained housing in the same place for twelve months.

Funding

Funding from the state Department of Social Services is matched by federal funding, including funding for specific programs such as job training and substance abuse counseling.

Future Plans

Extending its services to residents in isolated areas of Bennington County is a priority for the Center. The Center recently applied for a federal grant that would enable it to train rural residents to be health education and job training "associates," thus permitting them to serve their own communities.

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VERMONT FIRE TECHNICAL SUPPORT TEAM

Where

Headquartered at the George D. Aiken Resource Conservation and Development Council in Randolph, VT, the project assists rural fire companies throughout the state.

Mission

Inadequate protection from loss of life and property is a condition faced by many Vermont residents due to the rural nature of many of the state's communities and their inaccessibility to adequate water supplies. Consequently, rural property owners tend to pay higher insurance premiums and experience less personal security than suburban residents. Inadequate fire protection can carry severe economic penalties as well; it is estimated that eight out of ten businesses do not reopen after a fire, and businesses are often reluctant to locate in communities without adequate fire protection.

The Vermont Fire Technical Support Team's mission is to help communities improve their fire protection by assisting local fire departments in reducing the risk of injury, loss of life and property, and to improve the safety and welfare of the community.

How

With a staff of three (an engineering technician, an education and marketing specialist, and a team coordinator), the Team helps communities develop emergency water supply plans, evaluate and design water withdrawal systems (including dry hydrants and drafting basins), and provides construction inspection of installed improvements.

The Team's objectives are to have forty rural fire departments in the state fully understand water supply needs and management; to develop innovative fire prevention water supply plans with fifteen communities; to assist the communities in developing marketing strategies and identifying potential funding resources; and to improve communication among fire departments, fire regulatory agencies and their communities.

Accomplishments

One of the most important tools in a rural fire department's fire-fighting arsenal is a "dry hydrant," a non-pressurized pipe system that is permanently installed in ponds, lakes, and streams, that provides a suction water supply to tanker trucks. The Team is assisting four rural towns as they install dry hydrant systems, and is providing surveying and installation assistance on an "as needed" basis for communities that have monies earmarked for dry hydrant installation this year. The Team also has conducted a dry hydrant course for the Addison County Fire Fighters Association.

Informational exchange is another facet of the Team's services; it assisted in the development of a statewide summit called "Linking Economic Development and Community Fire Protection," held at the state house in Montpelier, and conducted fifty educational meetings throughout the state. Additionally, the team wrote and distributed a handbook to all towns in the state that explains recruitment strategies, fundraising activities, grants, and marketing.

Word of the Team's services has spread to all corners of the state; seventy-two towns and volunteer fire departments have asked the Team for assistance with their Fire Protection Water Supply Plans, surveys, and dry hydrant installations.

Funding

The Fire Technical Support Team is jointly supported by the George D. Aiken and Northern Vermont Resource Conservation and Development Councils, the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Americorps.

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VERMONT PARENT CHILD CENTERS

Where

State of Vermont - there are sixteen Parent Child Centers with at least one operating in each county

Mission

Parent Child Centers contribute to the healthy development of families by meeting the needs of parents, children, and families. At these Centers, parents receive support and education, referral to appropriate sources of help, and the chance to participate in self-esteem-raising activities. Most importantly, parents meet other parents and establish ties with their communities. Children receive quality child care, educational opportunities, and the chance to socialize and learn appropriate patterns of behavior.

How

Vermont's group of Parent Child Centers was created in 1987 and was incorporated as the Vermont Parent Child Center Network. This is a non-profit membership organization dedicated to the development and support of Parent Child Centers in Vermont. In 1988, the Agency of Human Services awarded the first grant awards to the eight existing Parent Child Center programs. Over the next six years, new Centers were developed according to a plan to locate at least one program in each of Vermont's fourteen counties. There are currently sixteen Parent Child Centers active in Vermont.

Each Parent Child Center has its own governing board of directors and is open to all families in Vermont. Each year, thousands of families seeking advice, support, or the companionship of their peers, are taking advantage of a multitude of Parent Child Center programs.

Each Center directly provides or facilitates access to a variety of services including child care, parent education, parent support, on-site services, home-based services, playgroups, and resources and referrals. An example of these services are the early education programs for four and five-year-old children with behavior problems. These programs help to prepare these children for public school. Some Centers provide child care for parents who are attending school. Other Centers offer workshops for parents to learn about child care and development. Often the Parent Child Centers provide clothes closets for low-income parents. The activities provided by each Center are all intended to contribute to the development of healthy families.

In order to ensure that only quality services are provided to Vermont families, the Parent Child Center Network holds monthly meetings and biannual retreats for the Parent Child Centers. At these meetings, staff and members share information, solve problems, and establish priorities for the Centers. Each Center is also reviewed annually through a peer review evaluation process. The Peer Review Committee, composed of Network and Agency of Human Services staff, meets with the executive director and board chair of each Parent Child Center. During these meetings, Center representatives review and discuss the Center's five-year plan, its progress in developing services, the coverage of its service area, its compliance with policies and procedures, and its participation in the Network and other community and state initiatives.

Accomplishments

Each Parent Child Center has found great success in its efforts to improve family life across the state. The number of Centers doubled in the six years after grant awards, and the Centers now cover the entire state. The Parent Child Centers serve approximately fifteen thousand families each year. The success and development of these families prove that each Parent Child Center has accomplished what it set out to do.

Funding

The Parent Child Centers of Vermont receive 65 percent of their support from state appropriations through the Agency of Human Services. The remaining support is provided by a mix of resources including various foundations, the local governments, and parent fees.

Future Plans

Vermont's Parent Child Centers are growing, and so is the demand for services as more families learn about the Centers. A major challenge currently facing the Centers is the extension for services to communities beyond their immediate geographic area. Some Centers have established satellite programs to provide services to children and families in outlying communities. Those Centers without these outreach programs look to this as a future goal.

In planning for the future, Center Executive Directors are also focusing on such issues as literacy, teen pregnancy prevention and parenting, and additional services for children ages birth to three years.

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THE VERMONT STUDENT ASSISTANCE CORPORATION

Where

State of Vermont, headquarters in Winooski, Vermont

Mission

"The mission of the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC) is to ensure that all Vermonters have the necessary financial and informational resources to pursue their educational goals beyond high school."

How

VSAC was created by the Vermont General Assembly in 1965 as a public, non-profit agency and has worked to help students of all ages and income levels. VSAC offers grant services, loan services, and an outreach program to aid and encourage Vermont students to pursue higher education.

Through its Grant Program and Financial Aid Services, VSAC administers state-funded grants. VSAC offers grants to a wide range of students, and administers financial aid services for seven Vermont post-secondary institutions, eliminating the need for these institutions to run their own financial aid offices.

Through its Loan Program, VSAC finances, guarantees, and services several education loans, including the Federal Stafford, the Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students, and loans for students pursuing training in health occupations. VSAC also provides loan repayment services, including a toll-free information line and new and expanded repayment options.

Since 1969, The Outreach Program has provided information and services to students at risk of not continuing their education. "At-risk" students are those who are low-income and/or whose parents did not graduate from college. The Outreach Program provides early college planning and college preparation services as well as presentations for school guidance counselors and other professionals. Students and others may also use the Resource Library, a lending service housing information on careers, higher education, and financial aid.

Accomplishments

VSAC has built a solid record of achievement during its 30 years of service to Vermonters. VSAC has provided Vermonters with more than 178,000 grants. VSAC's non-degree grant program is the only one of its kind in the country; the part-time grant program is one of only six in the US. VSAC awarded grants to 12,483 applicants in 1995.

Through its Loan Program, VSAC has financed loans worth over $350 million dollars through 111,000 accounts. VSAC has also guaranteed loans worth $451 million for more than 92,000 borrowers. In 1995, VSAC guaranteed loans worth more than $103 million, and financed more than 26,000 loans worth $104.5 million.

Through its Outreach Program, VSAC has served more than 92,000 Vermonters with information and counseling. In 1995, the Outreach Program provided counseling in individual and group settings to 20,144 Vermonters. An additional 63,000 individuals received information by telephone or mail.

VSAC has also assisted with the distribution of more than $10 million in private scholarships to Vermont students.

Funding

VSAC's Loan Financing program creates 75 percent of its revenue. Approximately 18 percent of VSAC's funding comes from appropriation from the State of Vermont for direct student aid, administration, and student support services. The remaining 7 percent of support comes from federal grant funds and other providers.

Future Plans

VSAC will continue to monitor and evaluate proposals to change the way students pay for college. Given the budget difficulties looming at the state and national levels, VSAC will also continue to explore new financing options. VSAC promises to continue providing quality services to Vermont students from all areas. VSAC looks forward to working with policy-makers, other members of the higher education community, and the public to ensure that Vermonters get the education and training they need to lead fulfilling lives and make a positive contribution to society.

Testimony

"Education is needed by poor people to get out of poverty. It's a key element of Vermont's welfare reform effort. Higher education should be seen as poverty prevention."
—Avram Patt, Director, VT Office of Economic Opportunity

"Thank you for helping me afford an education. Without organizations like yours, people like me just couldn't have the wonderful benefits of higher education."
—Anonymous VSAC participant

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WEST VIRGINIA

Pathways from Poverty Team

Accomplishments

The West Virginia Pathways from Poverty Team has been tremendously active in the past few months, and has been working hard in the effort to help the rural poor of the state. Because of West Virginia's high rate of poverty, the team has taken great action in developing approaches in dealing with the problem. Since their return from the NERCRD conference, the team has been very active. It has met every couple of months to discuss problems in West Virginia, and to create new methods for addressing those problems. The team has also begun to discuss creative solutions for these problems.

From these many discussions, the West Virginia Pathways Team has created a few approaches in order to address what they see as the three main problem areas in West Virginia. The team has agreed that the persistent barriers to ending rural poverty in the state are lack of information, recognition and communication about poverty, lack of effective representation for the poor and their concerns, and the lack of work. In order to begin to resolve these issues, the team has proposed a series of objectives, and has sent these objectives to the W. K. Kellogg Foundation in hopes of securing funding for their efforts.

Future Plans

The West Virginia Pathways Team has created specific activities that they believe will help alleviate the problem of poverty in the state. If they receive funding from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, they will initiate and begin these activities throughout the state. In order to improve the problem of lack of communication and information, the team proposes to create two information tools: an institute for social policy, and a World Wide Web page. These two ideas would help spread the word about how to better battle the problem of poverty in the state.

In order to increase effective representation of the people of West Virginia, the team has offered to act as a catalyst to begin a new mobilization process titled "Commonweal: A Poor People's Movement." This movement will bring improvements to the community as a whole. The major activity of the movement will be an outreach campaign that will contact every relevant agency, program, and institution currently operating in the state that has the agenda of the poor at its primary mission.

Lastly, the team will help to redefine work in the state by creating a service exchange credit program, a community employment program dedicated to creating new forms of work for the poor and unemployed, and a small grants and loans pool for low income people of the state to use to demonstrate their creativity and expertise. If funded, the team will help to create many effective pathways from poverty for their state.

Follow-Up Seed Grant Funds

The West Virginia Pathways from Poverty Team has requested $1,300 from the Northeast Regional Center to help with transportation costs of the state team members. The money will be used to reimburse team members for travel costs to future Pathways from Poverty meetings, for meeting space cost, and for other related expenses.

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APPALACHIAN BY DESIGN

Where

Based in Lewisburg, West Virginia, Appalachian By Design works in the Appalachian areas of West Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania.

Mission

This program seeks to connect rural women who have machine knitting and production weaving skills to specialty markets, by providing training, networking, and marketing services to those interested in profiting from their craft.

How

The project began when a California clothes designer, the owner of Espirit International, phoned Diane Browning at the Center for Economic Options, a non-profit organization dedicated to helping West Virginia women find creative ways of making money. The designer was interested in finding knitters who could make high-quality sweaters. Browning found eight women who owned knitting machines and were interested in meeting with the designer and knitting the sweaters. The Center for Economic Options helped set up a marketing organization to be the link between the women and Esprit, and thus, Appalachian By Design was born. Appalachian By Design's strategy is simple; the agency informs its network of fifty knitters about a new order it has received from an apparel company. Knitters sign up for whatever amount of work they want. The agency then offers training to teach new patterns or techniques as required by the order.

To be eligible as a knitter for Appalachian By Design, applicants must complete the agency's "Introduction to Knitting" course, which is taught by lead or experienced knitters and covers topics such as technical aspects of machine knitting, and self-employment and home-based work issues. Periodically, job training is offered as specific orders require it. For example, if a new order requires a complicated pattern, then the lead knitters train the other knitters one-on-one or in small groups, often in a knitter's home.

Accomplishments

Providing more than fifty rural women with the opportunity to earn extra income, Appalachian By Design is now an independent organization. It solicits and receives orders for knitted garments from a range of national and international clients, including such well-known companies as Esprit (one of their largest customers), Deva Lifewear, Linus Micheal Menswear, and George, Inc.

Funding

The organization is self-supporting.

Future Plans

Appalachian By Design is currently developing training in areas such as Improved Teaching Skills for Lead Knitters, Small Business Training, and Total Quality Production and Efficiency Skills.

Testimony

Barbara Killmeyer is one of the many who has benefited from this program. Barbara lives in Hampshire County, WV, on a farm 20 miles from the nearest town with her retired husband, mother in law, and adult son who has cerebral palsy. Barbara has been working for Appalachian By Design since 1992.

"Appalachian By Design was just what I needed when I needed it," said Barbara. *"My son requires constant supervision."*

"The knitting allows me to work at home and earn extra money. It works out well—I don't have to pay for a baby sitter, I don't have to buy new work clothes or pay for transportation, and I can interrupt work anytime. Being a part of the knitting network has been a really positive experience for me. It keeps me busy, learning, and interested."

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CABIN CREEK QUILTS COOPERATIVE

Where

Based in Malden Historic District, WV, the cooperative involves rural quiltmakers throughout the state.

Mission

The cooperative's mission is twofold. It seeks to preserve the region's quilting tradition while offering rural residents a chance to supplement their incomes. The cooperative supplies members with raw materials and, when possible, grants loans for equipment, and helps members market and sell the quilts they produce. By organizing exhibits in Malden, the cooperative also promotes the regional quilting tradition to tourists and residents alike.

How

The cooperative has a main office in Malden that is staffed with local and VISTA volunteers and a full-time director. The office solicits orders from mail-order catalogs, provides training to the quilters (through the VISTA volunteers), and coordinates the quilting process. The quilt-making process is usually divided among several members. One member stitches the "backing" and another sews the pattern, while a third sews the quilt together. In addition to the quilts produced under contract with various mail-order firms such as *Land's End*, many quilts are made for individuals by special order. Quilts also are sold in a Malden shop owned by the cooperative.

Members usually purchase their own stitching and sewing equipment, although the cooperative provides assistance when possible. The raw material for the quilts is purchased through the cooperative.

Accomplishments

Before the cooperative began, skilled quilt-makers, most of them rural women, were asking $10 or less for their products. Thanks to the cooperative, they now earn an average of $250 per month from quilting.

The cooperative has helped quiltmakers defend their craft from cheap imports by contracting with quality-conscious mail-order catalogs such as Land's End to market the quilts. Today, approximately 350 rural residents supplement their yearly incomes by sewing and stitching quilts for the Cooperative. The cooperative was profiled in a March 1994 issue of Country Living magazine.

Funding

Federal funds pay for the cooperative's VISTA volunteers, while a foundation grant from the state's Governor's Workplace Grant program helps pay for the training provided to members. Funding from the Appalachian Regional Commission pays for some of the equipment.

Future Plans

Tourism will play a larger role in the cooperative's future, with a permanent exhibit area planned for Malden that will showcase the region's tradition of quilting, thereby increasing awareness of the craft and encouraging more people to purchase quilts.

"We need to develop and cultivate appreciation for America's traditional crafts," director James Thibeault said.

Keeping a sense of membership within the cooperative is sometimes difficult because members are widely scattered across the state. The cooperative is refurbishing two houses in Malden that will serve as meeting centers and training sites, and it is hoped that it also will bolster the sense of community and togetherness vital for a cooperative enterprise.

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THE CENTER FOR ECONOMIC OPTIONS

Where

Programs throughout West Virginia, based in Charleston

Mission

The Center for Economic Options is a private, non-profit statewide organization committed to promoting equity and improving the economic position of West Virginians. The Center's primary focus is to provide for equal participation of women in economic leadership, community development, and gainful employment, with a special commitment to those women who have traditionally been excluded from these roles in society.

How

The Center's first flexible manufacturing network, Appalachian Knitwear, was created in 1993. Appalachian Knitwear is a broker-centered network of home-based commercial knitters. In 1994, the Center designated its Appalachian By Design network (now an independent non-profit statewide agency) as the provider of training, management, and brokering for Appalachian Knitwear.

In the same year, the Center was a leader and founding member of the Central Appalachian Network. This network of community enterprise development organizations and public/private sector organizations includes agencies in three states besides West Virginia and has been active in promoting the concept of a regional network that identifies common goals and opportunities related to sustained enterprise development.

Also created by the Center in 1994, the Appalachian Flower Network focuses efforts on potential growers and value-added producers of dried flower products in twenty three households across the state, providing training in business management, growing and dried flower design, and marketing.

Accomplishments

The Center for Economic Options worked continuously to facilitate economic development during 1994. During that year, the Center helped create and support a number of regional business networks that assist a variety of growing industries in rural areas across the state. These networks include the Appalachian Flower Network and Appalachian Knitwear.

The Center also helped create the Central Appalachian Network, a regional development network comprised of community enterprise development organizations, that is working to facilitate economic development in rural areas of West Virginia and three other states.

The Center served as a community resource by continuing to assist community-based agencies to increase their organizational abilities. The Center received 173 requests for technical assistance and provided technical assistance to 96 of these community organizations during 1994. The Center also provided training to twenty women in the construction trade. As a result, ten of these women, many of whom were AFDC mothers, were placed in construction trades earning from $5-$31 per hour.

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CLAY MOUNTAIN HOUSING, INC.

Where
Clay, West Virginia

Mission
Clay County has the highest percentage of substandard housing in West Virginia, the state with the highest percentage of substandard housing in the nation. A community-based non-profit housing organization, Clay Mountain Housing assists low and very low-income families who wish to improve their housing. The agency helps families who are attempting to secure housing loans by providing assistance with the loan application process. The agency also provides rehabilitation, repair, renovation, and construction services.

How
With four full-time employees, including counselors, a housing inspector and a construction supervisor, Clay Mountain's main focus is helping low-income families with incomes at or below 80% of the poverty level through the labyrinthine loan application process.

Before contacting lenders, the agency works with the applicants to determine whether they will be able to keep up with their housing payments. Applicant's past financial history, including payment history and present financial management skills, are taken into account. In some cases the agency determines that applicants need to improve their financial management skills before applying for a housing loan.

Once initial advising is complete, the agency works with the applicant to secure a loan. Using lenders who work with low-income families, Clay Mountain Housing packages the loans and performs site inspections, housing and budget counseling, and job estimates. Clay Mountain also provides loan packaging services. The organization has a construction crew, a small revolving loan fund that offers loans at 3% interest, and other support services to help families obtain housing.

Accomplishments
The agency has helped approximately 250 families obtain housing.

Funding
Funding is provided through the Benedum Foundation, the J.C. Penney Foundation, the Hilton Foundation, and the Commission on Religions in Appalachia. Churches and individual donations provide the remainder of funding. The organization gets no direct federal funds.

Future Plans
As a member of the Appalachian Empowerment Zone, a four-county cooperative venture to improve housing in the region, Clay Mountain plans to work with the other counties to establish more grass-roots housing programs. The agency also hopes to expand its revolving loan fund and increase its work crew in order to provide more construction services for low-income families.

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COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION REINFORCING EDUCATION

Where

Barbour County, West Virginia

Mission

Barbour County, WV, suffers from an unemployment rate of 22% and a median family income of $15,607—well below the state's median income of $20, 795. In addition, 43% of families with children under the age of 5 live below the poverty level. Behind these grim statistics are the people who must somehow provide their children with a supportive educational environment that will help them overcome such economic adversity. Lending a helping hand in this endeavor is the Community Association Reinforcing Education (CARE). This non-profit organization's mission is to encourage and improve educational achievement in children and adults through after-school programs, computer training, Adult Basic Education, and summer youth programs. CARE also serves as a community center for children in Barbour County, providing them with a place to study and engage in fun activities.

How

Operating with minimal overhead and extensive volunteer support, CARE is able to spend more than 90% of its grant funds on service delivery. Its After-School Adventure program provides volunteer tutors from nearby schools and the county at large to serve as mentors to Barbour County students in grades 1 to 8. The After-School program also includes tutoring, computer training, field trips, motivational banquets, and fun activities.

For parents and other adults in the community, the organization offers Adult Basic Education and computer training. Adult Basic Education includes GED preparation, college or military entrance preparation, and parent training. Summer youth programs featuring computers and field trips are offered to all area children regardless of their ability to pay. A $20,000 grant from the West Virginia High Technology Consortium, enabled CARE to replace its obsolete computers with state-of-the-art machines and two laptops. These new computers will enable the organization to offer at-home tutoring to adults.

Accomplishments

CARE's success as a community based education program has inspired three other groups to develop models similar to its own. During the past year, CARE's summer program served sixty-seven children, while thirty-five adults were served by its adult programs.

Funding

The program receives funding from the West Virginia Department of Education. Additional funding is provided by the Benedum Foundation, fundraising, and private donations.

Future Plans

Plans for the near future include a parent support group and parent-child interaction class that will include outdoor and indoor play and computer games for learning enrichment. Other plans call for a "CARE-Mobile," which will take technology and other services to communities where such opportunities are not available. In the long term, CARE hopes to become a model which other communities can adopt to initiate improvement and enrichment of their own communities. The organization has committed to aid three new groups in adopting CARE models similar to its own in order to meet needs in their communities.

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ENERGY EXPRESS

Where

low-income and rural West Virginia communities

Mission

While it is generally known that most children lose ground academically during summer vacation, children of low-income families tend to lose more ground than most. The cumulative effect of children falling back over successive summers is that by the end of elementary school, these children are significantly below grade level. And without school breakfast and lunch, these same children tend to lose ground nutritionally during the summer. Energy Express is a six-week summer program that seeks to improve school success by providing nutritious meals and an educational program to the children.

How

Each day, children receive two nutritious meals and, with college students serving as mentors, participate in an educational program focused on reading. Important program components include parent and community involvement, take-home books for children, and c[illegible]d initiated and implemented community service projects. Each mentor develops a strong relationship with a small group of children by sharing family-style meals, by providing experiences related to reading and writing, and by facilitating a community service project.

Expanding this successful program to meet the overwhelming needs of West Virginia children is the major challenge. Involving parents and other family members in the child's experience, developing community ownership of the program, supporting food costs with the allotted reimbursement and developing and maintaining a sustainable funding source continue as program challenges.

Accomplishments

The program expanded from two sites serving 95 children in 1994 to 16 sites serving 750 children in 1995. It provided approximately 43,500 meals, 54,375 educational hours and 4,500 take-home books. A new collaboration was born among state agencies, institutions, private foundations, and among groups in local communities. One hundred and six college students, many of them from low-income families, engaged in important paid community service and made a difference in the lives of the children. Even the governor was impressed by the program.

"The great thing about this program is that we are not just feeding these kids," said West Virginia Governor Gaston Caperton. *"We are giving them the guts of what they need to be successful in life—reading, writing and getting along with each other. I think we probably saved some children's lives this summer."*

Funding

The meals are provided through the USDA's Summer Food Service Program which reimburses sponsors for summer feeding programs. While the West Virginia University Extension Service has provided leadership, the funding and support comes from numerous state and local agencies and organizations, private foundations, and colleges and universities.

Future Plans

The goal of the program is to expand to fifty sites in 1996. A recently awarded AmeriCorps grant will help accomplish this expansion. In addition, Governor Caperton has pledged his support to expand to additional sites. Based on the results of an intensive evaluation in 1995, the program will undergo continuous improvement and redesign.

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